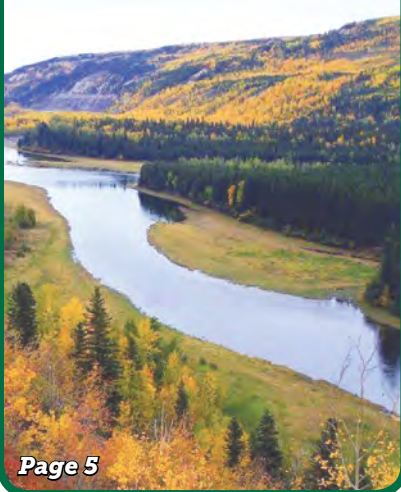


"We are realists... we dream the impossible" - Che



Fire This Time!

**SAVE THE PEACE!
STOP SITE C DAM!**



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HANDS OFF VENEZUELA!



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**7th International Che Guevara
Conference in Vancouver, Canada
- A Great Success!**

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By Azza Rojbi

"I was inside sitting at the funeral when the airstrike happened... I couldn't see who was next to me, I was looking for an exit. There were dead bodies and body parts, some people under rubble... There were children inside before the strike, but I couldn't see anyone after the strike. It was dark. I just saw the light and ran toward it to escape." This how Abdulla al-Shami, 35, described to Human Rights Watch workers his experience surviving one of the bloodiest Saudi airstrikes. October 8, 2017, marked one year since this horrendous attack by the Saudi-led coalition on a crowded funeral hall in the Yemeni capital Sana'a.

This indiscriminate bombing on a civilian target was described by Human Rights Watch and other humanitarian organizations as a war crime carried out with complete disregard for civilian life. According to a spokesperson for the health ministry in Sana'a, at least 110 people were killed and 610 wounded, including children as a result of this attack.

This criminal bombardment by the US backed Saudi-led coalition continues today. Vital infrastructures such as hospitals, schools, homes,



water tanks, sanitary systems, and roads, as well as important historical and cultural sites, have been completely destroyed by the airstrikes.

Human tragedy worsens in Yemen

According to the UN, over 10,000 people have been killed and over 40,000 have been injured.

The level of the humanitarian crisis is worsening daily as more than 21million people in Yemen are in immediate need of humanitarian assistance and nearly 900,000 people have been affected by a devastating cholera epidemic. The World Health Organization (WHO) referred to the outbreak in Yemen as "the worst cholera

outbreak in the world."

In addition to the criminal bombing campaign on Yemen, the Saudi government and their allies are imposing an air, land and sea blockade on the country. This criminal blockade has been creating shortages of many essential items, including food, fuel and medical supplies. More recently Saudi Arabia has tightened this blockade, shutting off all entry points to Yemen, blocking much needed food and humanitarian supplies from being delivered.

Over 20 international humanitarian agencies condemned the move by Saudi Arabia in a joint public statement "The people of Yemen are already living with the catastrophic consequences of an armed conflict - lasting for over two and a half years - that has destroyed much of its vital infrastructure and brought the provision of basic services to the brink of collapse... The continued closure of Yemen's borders will only bring additional hardship and deprivation with deadly consequences to an entire population suffering from a conflict that it is not of their own making. The humanitarian community in Yemen calls for the immediate opening of all air and seaports to ensure food, fuel and medicines can enter the country."

Speaking to reporters, the UN humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock warned that unless Saudi

Yemen QUAGMIRE for Saudi Arabia



Rally to mark two years of the military intervention by the Saudi-led coalition, in Sanaa, Yemen March 26, 2017

Arabia lifts the blockade on Yemen, the country will face "the largest famine the world has seen for many decades, with millions of victims."

What did the Saudi-led coalition achieve in Yemen?

Backed by the United States, the Saudi government and its military coalition began their bombing campaign in March 2015 under the pretense of restoring legitimacy and stability to Yemen. Today, over 2.5 years of war and destruction, Yemen is facing the worst humanitarian crisis in the world.

The Saudi government has failed to achieve any of the goals of their military campaign in Yemen ambitiously named "Decisive Storm". The only decisiveness seen on the ground is that of the Yemeni people in their fight against the foreign Saudi-led aggression on their country.

Despite all the logistical and military support offered by the US and the UK, the Saudi-led military coalition has been drastically failing in its so-called mission in Yemen, their puppet Abd Raboo Mansur Hadi, viewed as a traitor by Yemenis, remains exiled in his master's palaces in Riyadh. Not only is Saudi Arabia failing to dominate the military situation in Yemen, but the Yemeni forces are now taking up the fight against the Saudi government aggression across the borders, launching missiles and rockets into the kingdom's territory.

The Saudi government and their allies are in a quagmire in Yemen with no end at sight. The worsening humanitarian

crisis in the country is making it harder for the Saudi government to keep justifying the war internationally. In an article by the Washington Post titled "Yemen is



People inspect a house after it was destroyed by a Saudi-led airstrike in the capital, Sanaa, February 25, 2016 (top)



Children fetching water in Yemen's capital Sana'a (bottom)

ground, Yemenis are voicing their opposition to the war internationally by sharing their stories and

experiences online and on social media to try to counter the media blackout on the atrocities committed by the Saudi-led coalition.

Yemen's internal crisis and problems cannot be solved by foreign military aggression. Saudi's military campaign against the country is only bringing more death and destruction to the Yemeni people. What is needed today, by peace-loving people outside of Yemen especially, is to build an effective united antiwar anti-intervention movement against the Saudi-led war on Yemen.

In Canada, we need to continue to hold the Liberal government accountable for their support of Saudi Arabia's crimes and demand a cancelation of Canada's \$15 billion arms deal to supply the Saudi government with armored military vehicles.

Let's join the voices of our brothers and sisters in Yemen to defend their self-determination and their right to decide on the future of their country without the bullying and interventions of the Saudi government and their US master.

US/Saudi Arabia Hands off Yemen!

Stop Bombing Yemen!

Lift the Naval, Aerial and Land Blockade on Yemen!

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turning into Saudi Arabia's Vietnam", Farea al-Muslimi, a Yemen analyst at the Beirut-based Carnegie Middle East Center, said that the war on Yemen "is draining the Saudis militarily, politically, strategically...The problem is, they're stuck there."

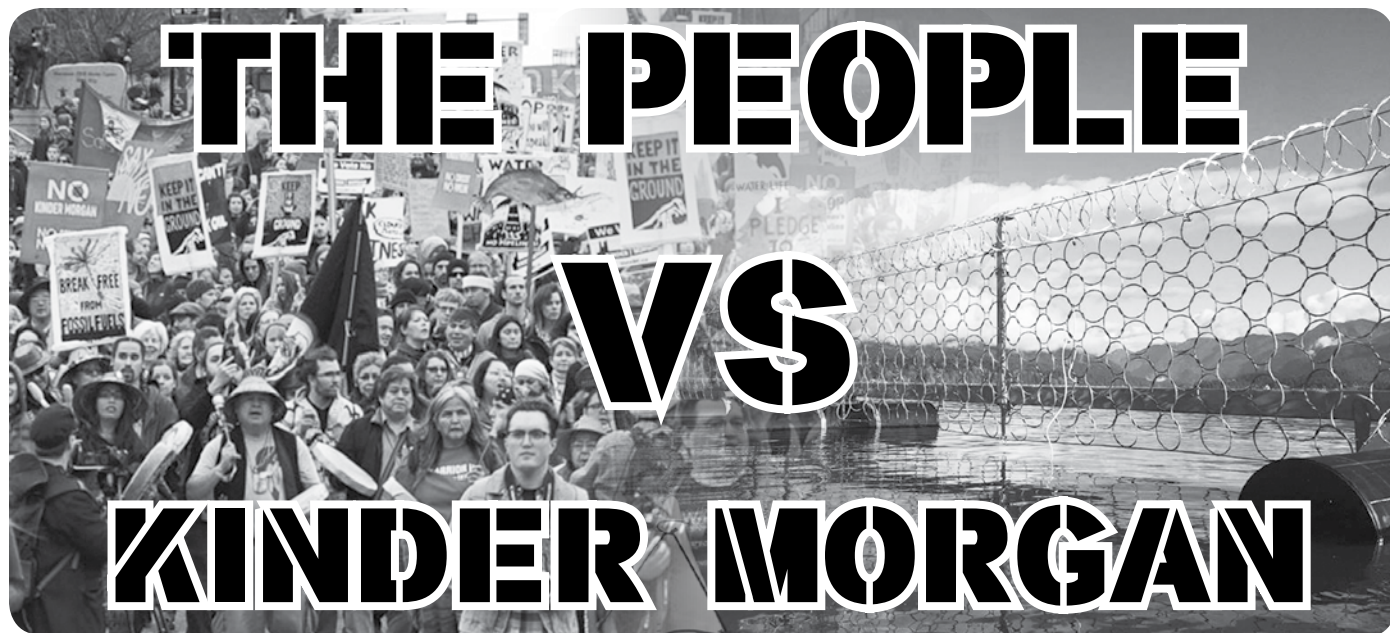
Yemenis resist against the Saudi War

On March 26, 2017, hundreds of thousands of Yemenis braved the Saudi fighter jets and took to the street of the Yemeni capital Sana'a to protest two years of the Saudi-led coalition ongoing military intervention in Yemen. Since then, the Yemeni people have kept resisting and fighting against the Saudi government aggression on their beloved country.

In addition to their resistance on the



Healthcare workers demonstrate against a blockade on Yemen imposed by Saudi Arabia, outside the headquarters of the United Nations in Yemen's capital Sana'a on May 7, 2015.



By Thomas Davies

Texas oil giant Kinder Morgan went ahead and started expanding its Westridge Marine Terminal in Burnaby this month, regardless of huge public opposition and regardless of the fact that they don't have nearly all the permits or permissions to build their proposed pipeline which would end at the terminal. While the future of the pipeline is hazy at best, there are two things that have been proven repeatedly from day one. First: Kinder Morgan is willing to bully, lie and break laws on its way towards pipeline construction. Second: the growing movement against the pipeline has shown itself to be dogged and consistent in its continuing opposition. As Kinder Morgan falls behind on its construction deadlines, this becomes clearer every day.

Wondering what Kinder Morgan has been up to this month? Here's the short list:

- They began expansion of the Westridge Marine Terminal to allow for three oil tankers to be loaded at once instead of just one. A good indication of the relationship between Kinder Morgan and the surrounding community was the fact that the first thing they did was build giant, floating razor wire fences to surround their facility. Very friendly...

- The company was ordered to remove unapproved anti-salmon spawning mats they illegally placed in B.C. and Alberta rivers along the proposed pipeline route. The NEB told Trans Mountain the use of such installations "prior to approval of relevant conditions for commencement of construction and approval" of the pipeline was non-compliant.

- After submitting construction permits in Burnaby which by their own admissions were incomplete, Kinder Morgan complained to the National Energy Board (NEB) that the city's refusal to issue permits in less than 10 days raises "serious issues of jurisdiction." This was after Kinder Morgan president Ian Anderson personally went to Burnaby City Hall to try and force the Mayor to force city staff to issue the permits.

The company says each month of delay results in as much as \$35-million in costs and more than \$90-million in forgone revenue for the company.

- Kinder Morgan has also ordered 300,000 tons of pipe without submitting the required quality management plan. They had promised to submit the completed documents by August 15, but by September had still not done so and ordered the pipe regardless.

Wondering what the movement was up to this month? Here's another short list:

- There were two well attended, "The People Vs. Kinder Morgan" rallies at the beginning and the end of 9 days of court proceedings by the Tsleil-Waututh, Squamish, Coldwater and Stk'emlupsemc Te Secwepemc Nations challenging Canadian government's approval of the pipeline. Over 600,000 has been crowdfunded to support this court case so far.

- Over 100 people staged a "Die-In" in front of Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale's Burnaby office, which happens to be at the foot of Burnaby Mountain where the Kinder Morgan tank farm is located.

The Burnaby Fire Department has opposed the expansion of the tank farm, as it puts over 35,000 SFU students and Burnaby Mountain residents in a deadly situation. With only one road up and down the mountain, a tank farm fire would trap them on top and "would create scenarios where fire containment is not possible." The office locked its doors and refused to receive a letter detailing the concerns.

- "Kayaktivists" and hundreds of supporters also temporarily stopped construction at the Westridge Marine Terminal by breaching the security zone surrounding a Kinder Morgan construction barge. Five kayakers were arrested by the RCMP, while indigenous leaders and support crews rallied on land. This action received extensive national and international news coverage.

- Meanwhile, construction of 10 Tiny Houses on Secwepemc territory continues on the path of the proposed pipeline, which would run over 500 km of Secwepemc Territory without the nation's consent. The houses are also being hooked to solar power thanks to cooperation with Lubicon Solar, an indigenous organized initiative which originally built a renewable energy installation that powers a health centre in the heart of the Alberta Tar Sands.

This is just the short list, and this is just over the month of October. Many more actions are planned for November, including another IntersACTION organized by the Climate Convergence Coalition in front of a downtown TD Bank branch. TD continues to be the largest funder of the

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By Thomas Davies

There's a reason that the BC Liberals didn't send the Site C Dam for a customary review when they unearthed the previously rejected hydroelectric mega-project in 2010. They knew the results wouldn't support building it. Now after construction was already force-started, a recently release BC Utility Commission (BCUC) includes some damning findings:

- Cancelling the project would cost \$1.8 billion, on top of 2.1 billion which will have been spent by the end of the year.
- Completing the project would cost over \$10 billion. Almost 2 billion over budget.
- Unresolved risks include issues with tension cracks, cost overruns and changes in technology leading to lower-than-predicted energy demands.
- "Increasingly viable alternative energy sources such as wind, geothermal and industrial curtailment could provide similar benefits to ratepayers as the Site C project, with an equal or lower unit energy cost."
- BC Hydro's projected energy needs are "excessively optimistic"

In short, we have been lied to and taxpayers are on the hook for billions because of government and corporate recklessness. Additionally, the BCUC report was very limited in its scope, and did not deal with necessary issues such as:

Indigenous Rights

The construction of the dam violates the rights of the Treaty 8 First Nations in the area, who were guaranteed the rights to hunt, trap, fish and continue their traditional way of life on the land. This will be impossible after flooding 107 kilometres of the Peace River and its tributaries.

Site C also violates the United Nations

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which requires free, prior, and informed consent from Indigenous Peoples for the construction of projects on their traditional lands and territories. Site C does not have this consent, and would destroy hundreds of cultural sites, gravesites, and sacred areas.

As West Moberly First Nation Chief Roland Willson points out, "If you're going to talk about reconciliation... Site C should be scrapped, pulled off the shelf, burnt so it can never come back again and we move forward on the alternatives package."

It Would Destroy Necessary Farmland

The largest-ever exclusion of land from the Agricultural Land Reserve was made by the BC Liberals in 2015 to permit the flooding and destruction of this unique and valuable farmland.

Wendy Holm, a professional agrologist who provided expert testimony to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act/ Environmental Assessment Office joint panel on Site C wrote, "B.C. is food-deficient in vegetables; we currently supply only 43 per cent of the B.C. market for fresh vegetables that can be grown in this province. The alluvial soils to be flooded to produce overpriced power for the Site C dam are capable of producing sufficient fresh vegetables to provide the nutritional needs of a million people. Forever."

We Don't Need the Power

To begin with, BC Hydro has never been honest about power consumption requirements or the viable alternatives to Site C. An independent analysis provided to the BCUC by the auditing firm Deloitte found between 1964 and 2016, BC Hydro overestimated future electricity demand in B.C. 77 per cent of the time.

BC Hydro also told the BCUC that it had

ruled out solar energy because it will cost \$97/MWh in 2025. After questioning, they admitted the cost of solar is already half that at \$48/MWh.

A recent UBC report found that Site C is now much more expensive than an alternative consisting primarily of wind power, pumped storage, and energy conservation. The report found that according to BC Hydro's own forecasts, predicted electricity demand has dropped significantly. Site C electricity will not be fully required for nearly a decade after the project is finished and if demand growth does not keep up with BC Hydro's current forecasts, power from Site C would likely need to be sold at a loss.

What About the Jobs Though?

To summarize, Site C: is billions over budget, late, violates indigenous rights, destroys unique farmland and provides expensive power we likely won't need. So what's the argument for building it?

Jobs. There are over 2000 people working on the construction site, with many more spin-off jobs in communities like nearby Fort St. John.

The first thing is to point out that the responsibility for this situation is with BC Hydro, the BC Liberals, and the corporate construction interests that pushed this project forward even though they knew it was a bad deal and a shaky investment. They are the ones who put peoples' livelihoods in jeopardy by promising them jobs on a ridiculous project.

Is building an unnecessary and destructive dam really the only way to employ people? Of course not. That land specifically is fertile and unique, and already a coalition between the Treaty 8 Tribal Association, Peace Valley Landowner Association, Peace Valley

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Kayak flotilla in front of Kinder Morgan tank farm expansion construction



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proposed pipeline expansion.

Most Sides Are Clear, Some Sides Are Not

While the corporation and the community go head to head, the Federal government remains firmly in favour of the pipeline project while the provincial NDP has missed excellent opportunities to join and support community action to stop the pipeline. While they campaigned on a promise to do everything they could to stop the project, the BCNDP government took the unusual position of fighting the Squamish Nation in B.C. Supreme Court over the provincial certificate of approval the BC Liberals

granted the pipeline. Environment Minister George Heyman justified this by saying the current government was somehow unable to oppose the certificate approved by the previous administration.

“When the NDP got into office, they were quite vocal about this issue,” commented Squamish Chief Ian Campbell. “The response we are getting now is that they will challenge our position. It makes us wonder where the province stands.”

Keep On Keeping On

The lessons communities and organizers are learning over and over again are that regardless of provincial or federal government’s positions (or non-positions)



on the Kinder Morgan pipeline – the project will not be stopped without a mass movement of people. The stakes are too high to expect the corporation to step down any other way, and the consequences of continued Dirty Tar Sands extraction are too great for us to allow them to continue. We have been building a strong alliance of indigenous nations, students, poor and working people, and we must continue this important and necessary work. We must continue to say, “Kinder Morgan, We Still Say No! People and Planet Before Pipelines and Profit!”

*Follow Thomas Davies on Twitter:
@thomasdavies59*

continued from page 5

Environment Association and Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative presented an alternative vision for the valley to the Joint Review Panel considering the Site C project.

Discussing the economic impact is not enough, although there is also a solution for it. Simply reduce BC Hydro work hours to 30 hours a week with no reduction in wages. This would mean the current 2000 Site C workers could be employed working on other projects, and hundreds more would need to be hired and trained as well.

Cancelling the project would also save literally billions which could be put to great use in education infrastructure, and the creation of sustainable jobs that could actually support those families in the long-term. All that is required is the political will and some long-term planning.

Unfortunately, even with the damning BCUC Site C report and other issues, NDP Premier John Horgan has still remained non-committal. He has also said he won't consider the UN Declaration on Indigenous Rights related to Site C for the incomprehensible reason that this would be

“retrospective”.

What Should Happen Now?

The cancellation of the project needs to happen immediately. Every day prolonging the decision wastes more and more taxpayer money. The BC NDP/Green government are in a position to show leadership in respecting indigenous rights and building a sustainable world during a time of obvious climate crisis.

As well as cancellation, we need to also demand an independent public inquiry into how we were forced into the Site C mess to begin with. There has been a major lack of accountability, obvious deceptions, and already billions of our taxpayer dollars wasted. An independent public inquiry would deal with the workers, farmers, indigenous, environmental and other concerns, as well as examining the obviously flawed decision-making process without government interference.

Fortunately, the momentum is against the project and towards accountability. Site C went from relative obscurity to major provincial election issue thanks to a public campaign, and recently 120,000 signatures calling for the cancellation of the Dam were delivered to the provincial government. Right now is an incredibly crucial time, and we need keep the pressure on!

Stop Site C!

Independent Public Inquiry Now!

*Follow Thomas Davies on Twitter:
@thomasdavies59*



By Manuel Yepe

The mysterious case of the alleged “acoustic attacks” against US diplomatic personnel in Cuba turns out to have been a media maneuver aimed at damaging tourism as part of the blockade against the island.

One of Cuba’s greatest attractions for foreign tourism is the guarantee of security offered by the island to visitors from any part of the world. Another is the high level of public health in Cuba, one of the highest in the Western Hemisphere with health indicators comparable to those of the most developed nations.

In addition to the exceptional conditions with which the island has been endowed by nature, the popular revolution of 1959 has incorporated the social conditions of peace and harmony that the visitor appreciates from the first moment of their stay in Cuba. More

students, the sector of American visitors that has grown the most in Cuba –118% in the first half of the year– given that conventional tourism is still prohibited by the US blockade, *Diario de Cuba*, half-financed by the governments of the United States and Spain, wrote: “There are signs that students and retirees (from the U.S.) plan to cancel their trips to the island”, since neither “Washington nor Havana have been able to prevent the attacks, which could generate an uncontrollable crisis”. *El Nuevo Herald*, a mouthpiece for the extreme right-wing Cubans in Miami, assured its readers that Raúl Castro is turning a diplomatic crisis into an economic, potentially destabilizing one.

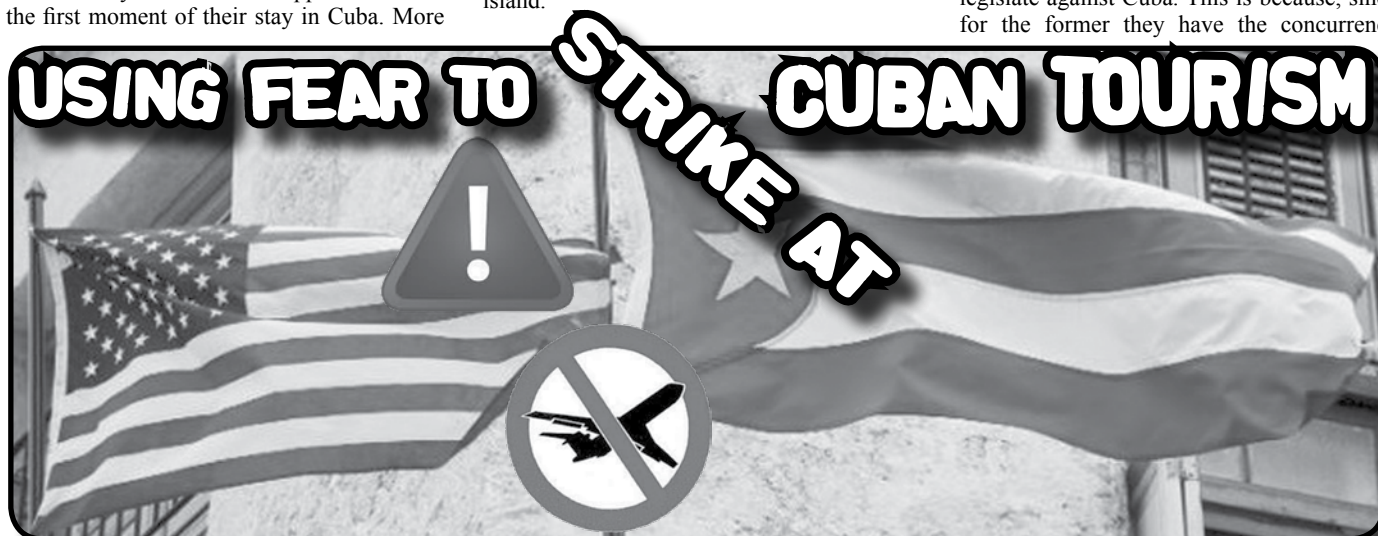
Agencies and media collaborated in this way with the objective of the White House that came to life on September 29. That was when, recognizing that it was “not aware” of the origin of the supposed acoustic attacks, it officially recommended not traveling to the island.

administration.

However, RESPECT, the largest US association of travel promoters in Cuba, rejected –as unnecessary and counterproductive– the “security warning” issued by the State Department, arguing that Cuba is a “safe destination.”

The Spanish newspaper *El País* followed with an interview with Thomas Shannon, US Undersecretary of State. He held Cuba responsible for everything that had happened, but without clarifying what he was referring to, and without contributing any element to such an unusual story. Republican Senator Marco Rubio, Donald Trump’s current spoiled scion, seems to be, according to analysts, the one who is behind the nefarious campaign about “sonic attacks” in Cuba.

Everything indicates that, now, the tactic chosen by the right, at the service of imperialism, is to generate fear more than to legislate against Cuba. This is because, since for the former they have the concurrence



than half a century of possessive paranoia, aggravated by the economic, commercial and financial blockade, have not been able to counteract the enormous achievements of socialism, even if they have postponed or limited many revolutionary economic and social advances in the country.

Basque journalist José Manzaneda, coordinator of the *Cubainformación* website, a channel that broadcasts news, reports and commentaries on the island from Spain, has denounced the media’s objective against Cuba over the campaign of alleged sonic attacks.

Manzaneda remembers that it was the Argentine newspaper “*Clarín*”, among many other media, who published a report two years ago from the Associated Press. Its focus was on an American traveler who felt “a sudden loss of feeling in his four extremities, in the same hotel where some affected diplomats were staying.”

Then there’s the growing interest among

“Coming from the government of a country where every year 30,000 people die by firearms, more than a thousand by police, and 31% of the world’s mass shootings are recorded, this alarm seems like a joke in bad taste,” says Manzaneda.

The extreme-right of Cuban origin of the Republican party, which, in exchange for its vote on other matters, already manages Donald Trump’s Cuba policy. It seeks to reverse the growth experienced through the trips of Americans to the island and damage the income from them which it brings to the Cuban economy.

In line with this campaign, the conservative *Washington Examiner* asked the House of Representatives to demand that Cuba “evaluate security at its ten international airports.” This is an inadmissible interference that seeks to reduce the number of visitors from the US, in this case by canceling the regular flights authorized by the Obama

–conscious or unconscious– of powerful international agencies and media, so much so that, for the second, they run the risk of increasing the division in the Republican ranks in Congress.

Let it be known then that all this diabolical mischief of sonic attacks is nothing more than another element of the blockade against Cuba that this past November 1, was condemned almost unanimously by the world community in the UN for the 26th consecutive year. November 2 of 2017.

Manuel E. Yepe, is a lawyer, economist and journalist. He is a professor at the Higher Institute of International Relations in Havana. He was Cuba’s ambassador to Romania, general director of the Prensa Latina agency; vice president of the Cuban Institute of Radio and Television; and secretary of the Cuban Movement for the Peace and Sovereignty of the Peoples.

www.englishmanuelyepe.wordpress.com



7TH INTERNATIONAL CHE GUEVARA CONFERENCE — A GREAT SUCCESS!

"FROM THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION TO THE CUBAN REVOLUTION: THE QUESTION OF LEADERSHIP, IMPLEMENTING THE SOCIALIST PROJECT & WHERE WE ARE TODAY!"

OCTOBER 27-29, 2017 - Vancouver, Canada

By Tamara Hansen

June 13-14, 2008, Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) launched its first International Che Guevara Conference in honour of revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara's 80th birthday. Titled "Che Guevara Thinker and Fighter: Are his ideas relevant for the 21st Century?" the conference brought to the forefront the powerful ideas of the Cuban revolution and one of its most dynamic thinkers and leaders, Ernesto Che Guevara. Since 2008, this Vancouver-based conference has become an institution in Canada, North America, and internationally for discussing and debating the revolutionary ideas of socialism and the fight to build a better world. Every conference welcomes a diverse audience from many backgrounds including academics, workers, immigrants and refugees, Indigenous people, organizers, activists, and the curious. Each event brings together people from Cuba, Canada, the U.S. and internationally in



L to R: Gerardo Alfonso, Cuban musician; Wilfredo Perez Bianco, Venezuelan Consul General Vancouver; Tania Lopez Larroque, Cuban Consul General Toronto; and Luis Morlote Rivas, Vice President of Cuba's Union of Writers and Artists, after the Indigenous closing.

discussions about some of the most powerful ideas for the future of humanity. The 7th International Che Guevara Conference held October 27-29, 2017 was no exception to this important tradition.

FRIDAY OCTOBER 27, 2017

Concert featuring legendary Cuban musician Gerardo Alfonso, raising funds for hurricane reconstruction and relief in Cuba

On Friday October 27 over 120 people joined Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) to launch the 7th International Che Guevara Conference in Vancouver, Canada. It was a beautiful evening to gather together for a concert and fundraiser for reconstruction efforts in Cuba after the devastating Hurricane Irma hit the island in early September 2017.

Tamara Hansen, the coordinator of VCSC, welcomed everyone to the event. She soon introduced Lucy Ortiz, a Salvadorian poet and Frida Marzolina, a Bolivian poet, both living in Vancouver. Each woman read beautiful poems, Lucy dedicated her poem to children working to overcome natural disasters, especially in Cuba and Puerto



Gerardo Alfonso, Cuban musician, performs at the fundraiser for Hurricane relief and reconstruction in Cuba.

Rico, and Frida read a poem in thanks of Evo Morales and to celebrate the Aymaran Indigenous culture and people of Bolivia. Tamara then welcomed to the stage local guests, CanAmérica, a Latin American band performing songs of social justice and change. They opened their set sending a hug to the Cuban people struggling after the hurricane, and also to the 5 Cuban heroes free in Cuba today after spending over 16 years unjustly held in U.S. jails. Following the lively performance by CanAmérica, attendees were invited to buy raffle tickets for some exciting Cuban prizes and the stage was set up for the evening's headliner, the legendary Cuban musician, Gerardo Alfonso!

Joining us all the way from Havana, Cuba, Gerardo Alfonso began his set on the piano playing a wonderful mix of songs which communicate his observations about life, history, hopes, and aspirations. After performing beautifully on the piano, Gerardo let the audience know that he

**FULL CONFERENCE PHOTOS,
VIDEO & MEDIA COVERAGE
[HTTP://CHEGUEVARACONFERENCE.CA](http://CHEGUEVARACONFERENCE.CA)**



Special Session at the end of the first full day of the 7th International Che Guevara Conference.
L to R: Tamara Hansen, Professor Henry Heller, Tania Lopez Larroque, and Luis Morlote Rivas

had been suffering from a cold and was holding back during his performance so far, but was going to give it his all as his claimed his most trusted instrument, his guitar. Soon he had everyone singing along with him to songs such as “Asi de Sencillo” (As Simple As That), “Sábanas Blancas” (White Sheets) & “Son los Sueños Todavía” (These are Still the Dreams). The audience was so impressed by his performance that they demanded an encore, he played a soothing melody to bid everyone good night.

The dynamic concert was an enormous success for kicking off the 3-day conference and also raised over \$1000 for the Canadian Network on Cuba’s Hurricane Relief and Reconstruction Fund. Everyone was invited back to the Russian Hall the next morning for breakfast and a full two days of speakers, workshops, films, art displays, food, discussion, and revolutionary politics!

SATURDAY OCTOBER 28, 2017

Day 1 of speakers, workshops, discussion & revolutionary politics!

On Saturday morning Tamara Hansen opened the first full day of the 7th International Che Guevara Conference held under the theme of, “From the Russian Revolution to the Cuban Revolution: The Question of Leadership, Implementing the Socialist Project & Where We Are Today!” Tamara first recognized that the Russian Hall sits on the traditional and unceded territories of the Tsleil-Waututh (səlilwətaɣ), the Musqueam (xʷməθkʷəy̓əm), and the Squamish

(Skwxwú7mesh) Coast Salish Nations. She then welcomed to the stage Eagle Eyes, a hereditary chief from the Sechelt (shíshálh) Nation and long-time organizer for the environment and other social justice causes, who shared a powerful song after also recognizing the territory.

“Fidel & Che’s Legacy in Cuba Today” was the title of the first keynote address of the Conference, delivered by Ms. Tania Lopez Larroque, the Cuban Consul General of the Cuban Consulate in Toronto. Tania started her talk remarking how the legacy of Fidel and Che is both easy and difficult to speak about, as they are “everything” to the Cuban people. Tania explained during her remarks, “Defence of culture, I would say, is one of the most relevant legacies Fidel and Che have left for our country. To defend culture, not as a slogan – not only because it is what defines our nationality or any other aspects of someone’s singularity – but because culture determines people’s capacity to think, to evaluate what is good and what is not. That is why Fidel always said to the people ‘Read’ not ‘Believe.’”

Tania’s excellent keynote received a loud applause from the audience and led very well into the first conference workshop, “When Africa Called, Fidel and Cuba Answered”. Professor Isaac Saney, visiting from Dalhousie University in Halifax, as well as co-chair of the Canadian Network on Cuba, gave an excellent presentation on this topic, outlining the incredible role Cuba has played in Africa since the triumph of the Cuban revolution in 1959, especially the decisive victory at Cuito Cuanavale against the racist South African apartheid

army.

After a good discussion, the meeting broke for lunch, with delicious food and a great time to continue the conversations. The conference then reconvened for the second workshop, “Discussion on Music and Race in Cuba with Legendary Cuban Musician Gerardo Alfonso.” Gerardo Alfonso, who had wowed everyone the night before with his music, came to share his ideas as an academic and artist, by outlining the long history of music and culture in Cuba as a tool of political struggle and independence. He also explained the need for culture to promote the voices of those who have been traditionally marginalized in Cuba and around the world, especially Afro-Cuban artists.

After a good discussion with Gerardo, it was time for the third workshop of the conference, “Cooperatives & Sustainability in the Land of Martí,” featuring Wendy Holm, Professor of UBC’s International Field Studies in Sustainable Agriculture (Cuba), agrologist, economist, author, and sustainability expert. Wendy gave a dynamic presentation about Cuba’s drive for environmental sustainability and the creation of worker’s cooperatives in both the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors.

This led to the special session with a film and discussion. The documentary “Mariela Castro’s March: Cuba’s LGBT Revolution,” outlined the history of homophobia and transphobia in Cuba and the campaign against them today being waged by Cuba’s queer activists, the National Centre

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Chief Bob Chamberlin

Vice-President, Union of BC Indian Chiefs

Excerpt from Speech at 7th International Che Guevara Conference

Chief Bob Chamberlin is the Vice President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs and Elected Chief Councillor of the Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis First Nation on Vancouver Island. Despite an incredibly busy schedule, he is also well known as a leader at social justice events around the province. Whether it be the fight against the Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion or draconian "anti-terrorist" laws like Bill C-51 – he has always made time in his busy schedule to participate.

He opened the second day of the 7th International Che Guevara Conference and instantly engaged the attendees with a speech which wove story-telling and light-hearted moments with a serious discussion about the fight of Indigenous nations in Canada for self-determination. Making common cause with Che's internationalist struggle for justice for oppressed peoples, he summarized the common vision: "...to look after our peoples and to make sure that we're no better or no worse than any other people anywhere else in the world. Isn't that a wonderful goal? I believe that's what the man we're celebrating today wanted – it's that equality and to make sure that we all had the things that we needed and that we had them not at the expense of our neighbour. So, we could all enjoy this human experience in the best way possible."

Here is a short excerpt of the speech he delivered that day. The full video version has also been uploaded to Youtube.

Quite a number of years ago I had the good fortune of being taken under the wing of several of my elders and taught how to sing our songs of our culture. One of the parts of that journey with my elder was an expression that essentially says, "We are all one people." Along the journey of learning of our culture I learned of the origin stories of our people, and this is not dissimilar to other people and other indigenous peoples found around the world. What it does, is it tells our story. Tells of the creation of our people and the lands that we come from. Of course, today in

modern context that defines our aboriginal title lands, and what we've always done in our territories is called aboriginal rights here in Canada.

My uncle Micheal told me once that he was born on the banks of the Kingcome River in a canoe. He said, "There was an eagle flying over top," and I thought, "I don't care who you are, it's tough to be more Indian than that!" (laughter) But I told that story to one of my other elders and he said, "Ya, me too, but it was a seagull that flew over!" (more laughter) But the lesson that I was taught by these wonderful men is that not one of our origin stories is more important than any other origin story. That really underlines that, "We are all one people," and what little I understand of the man we are here celebrating today is that he understood that very fact very clearly. He did not place boundaries upon himself to help everybody. That is beyond admiration. It demands respect that someone would look out for the benefit of all people.

The foundation of our culture is something in Chinook jargon that's called a potlach. And so when the visitors arrived and watched what we do as people, as the creator has given us the directions, it completely baffled them. Because here's this chief hosting everybody and giving everything he owns away to everybody else. The anthropologists like to call that "reverse reciprocity", but what it was, was a leader looking after his people. A leader making sure that all the needs of his community were met and not just his own.

You can see how that goes very much against the western civilization view of, "Look at my big car, and my big bank account," and yet our chiefs were looking to get rid of everything to make sure that everybody had their needs met.

That was the experience at the very beginning of Canada. Where they didn't understand our ways, yet our ways included welcoming them. Our ways included helping them settle in. Their way was to implement the governance system that put themselves at a higher level of evolution and to displace our people from our lands. And make great vast wealth from our lands and our territories and make sure that we did not have that same opportunity.

So, when I know that is the reality of how Canada began, every time I hear the national anthem "Oh Canada", that's what I think, "Oh...Canada..." (laughter) They didn't quite get it right.

When you look at what really makes Canada, Canada, it's very disgustingly racist. Because you'll find that the Crown asserts its authority over the lands because they were "terra nullius," which means it was vacant land. I mean, I'm pretty sure they saw us all around our territories when they arrived. They called it vacant lands because of the 'doctrine of discovery'. So, we were not "evolved" enough to be considered human. I'm not sure how you feel about that, but I feel that that's really racist. Because now we have governance in Canada and mechanisms and institutions built upon that very foundation. So, they hold all the decision making among themselves, and their own concept of the world at the expense of ours.

One thing that I say to Canadians when I have an opportunity, much like today, to speak to people is when you see First Nations at the courthouse, when you see First Nations on the roadblocks, when you see us protesting – by and large what we're doing is we are pointing at the failures of democracy in Canada. We're pointing at the failings of the federal and provincial governments to live up to their own laws and constitution. I've said to every Canadian I can that that should be a concern for everybody. If you recall back when apartheid was operational in South Africa, I don't know if enough Canadians understand that that government came to Canada to study the reserve system so they could modify it and implement it as apartheid.

I know as a First Nations person or a leader, which I've engaged with the provincial and federal government in consultations, on the accommodation of our Aboriginal people's rights, there has never been the acceptance of the answer, "No." There is never in that system contemplated the answer, "No." So whatever the government and industry comes and talks to our people about, the answer is already "Yes, but we'll deal with your little rights as some measure of inconvenience." Where the picture will stay the same, but we might put different corners on the frame. So that's the reality that we face as First Nations for generations, and it took a lot of fighting to get even to that level.

So now that UN Declaration on the Rights

of Indigenous People speaks to “free, prior and informed consent,” a lot of the fear-mongering in Canada now is that you have people that aren’t so open-minded saying, “So does that give them Indians a veto on projects?” But they won’t understand that the veto against our rights was already in place for generations in Canada. So if we truly want to be a fair, just and open society and country, to be proud of internationally, we must build processes that anticipate and allow for any outcome of a process. Not a predetermined outcome - which has been the experience of First Nations people.

The Canadian society is focusing on our authority in our territories. Why do I want our people to have authority in our territories? So, my son can understand what our lands mean to us as people. So the salmon are there for us to do what we’ve always done, the clams are there to do what we’ve always done, the cod, the deer – everything that makes up our territory and informs our identity in a very clear way is available for the next generations. That’s not a selfish view. That’s a very loving,

caring, respectful way of ensuring that what I’ve enjoyed with my elders in our territories and our resources are there for future generations to do the very same.

This where what I understand and what I’ve learning about UNDRIP, is that you can’t just pick one and say, “This is what we’re doing”. You must consider the overall entire concept found within that document, to look after our peoples and to make sure that we’re no better or no worse than any other people anywhere else in the world. Isn’t that a wonderful goal? I believe that’s what the man we’re celebrating today wanted – it’s that equality and to make sure that we all had the things that we needed and that we had them not at the expense of our neighbour. So, we could all enjoy this human experience in the best way possible. And removing that opportunity of standing on people so I can see over the fence. It’s about all of us seeing over the fence.

*Follow Chief Bob Chamberlin on Twitter:
@ChiefBobbyC*

U.S. Out of Afghanistan!

**VANCOUVER PROTESTS
16 YEARS OF WAR
AND OCCUPATION OF
AFGHANISTAN
DURING INTERNATIONAL
DAYS OF ACTION**



By Janine Solanki

October 7th, 2001 marked the beginning of the U.S.-led so-called “war on terror”, what is more accurately a war OF terror. With the thin excuse of responding to the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York, Afghanistan was invaded and subsequently occupied. 16 years later not only is Afghanistan still under U.S. occupation, but the new era of

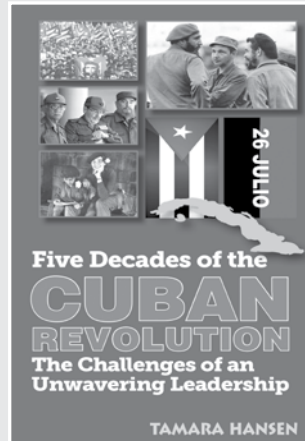
war and occupation which has expanded, country after country, over the last 16 years. Now in addition to the destruction that war has inflicted upon Afghanistan, we also have Iraq, Libya, Yemen and Syria bearing the wounds of war, along

with military operations and drone attacks on other countries in Africa and the Middle East. A single result shows just how devastating the entire new era of war and occupation has been. The world now is facing the largest refugee crisis in human history, and these refugees are coming from the countries under U.S.-led wars because war and occupation has made

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5 Decades of the Cuban Revolution The Challenges of an Unwavering Leadership

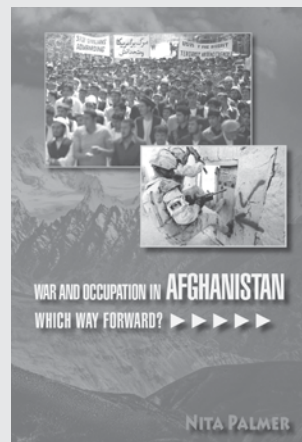


By Tamara Hansen

Coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC). She is also an editorial board member of The Fire This Time newspaper. She has travelled to Cuba over a dozen times and has written extensively on Cuban politics since 2003.

April 2010, paperback, \$14.00
314 pages, illustrated,
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WAR AND OCCUPATION IN AFGHANISTAN WHICH WAY FORWARD?



By Nita Palmer

Author and researcher on the war in Afghanistan. She is a member of the editorial board of Vancouver, Canada-based social justice newspaper Fire This Time.

January 2010, paperback, \$7.00
226 pages, illustrated,
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"Building Revolution Across Borders"

Reflections on "El Che" 2017 Conference Vancouver, BC

by Deb Goldman &
Moon "Luna" Vazquez

This is a report back written by members of the US Women & Cuba Collaboration about the 7th International Che Guevara Conference organized from October 27-29, 2017 in Vancouver, Canada. Deb Goldman and Moon "Luna" Vazquez were speakers and participants in the conference and their reflection is an important perspective for readers of Fire This Time. This report back will also appear in the next newsletter of US Women & Cuba Collaboration.

It was a crisp clear gorgeous autumn morning on October 28th when Moon (Luna) Vazquez and Deb Goldman headed up I-5 from Seattle to Vancouver Canada where the US Women and Cuba Collaboration was invited to participate in a panel discussion on LGBT issues highlighting their Cuba and US Lesbian and Allies project at the 7th International Che Guevara Conference. They arrived at the conference in time to hear Gerardo Alfonso, legendary Cuban musician, speak on how through concerts and workshops he uses his music and lyrics to engage people, especially youth, in the context of current Cuban social and political issues, and how Race is at the forefront of these issues.

The entire conference was extraordinarily well organized by the Vancouver Solidarity Communities in Solidarity with Cuba. One main organizer Tamara Hansen is the author of 5 Decades of Cuban Revolution: The Challenges of an Unwavering Leadership, 2010. We felt very welcomed by the Vancouver Committee of amazing volunteers,

many of whom were quite young. We were extremely honored to be able to present and participate in this conference which included an incredible lineup of distinguished Cuban, Venezuelan and Canadian presenters reminding us that in spite of the US blockade, Cuba's accomplishments and unwavering loyalty to the principles of the Revolution are remarkable. The overarching theme of the conference was both honoring the socialist principles of the works of Che and celebrating the 1st anniversary of the death of Fidel Castro and his significant and vital impact around the world.

Among the guest speakers were Ms. Tania Lopez Larroque, Counsel General of the Cuban Consulate in Toronto and has been working for Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 17 years including posts in Mexico and Argentina. She gave keynote "Fidel & Che's Legacy in Cuba today" and spoke throughout the 2-day conference including a special panel session on "Marxism, Communism and the Relevancy of Revolutionary Ideas Today". She is young, a passionate, articulate and fascinating speaker. Other speakers included Mr. Luis Morlote Rivas from Havana, Vice-President of the Cuban Union of Writers and Artist (UNEAC) and member of the Cuban national assembly, another young person speaking fervently about the role of writers and artists in continuing to raise the collective social consciousness of the next generation of Cubans; Mr. Wifredo J. Perez from Caracas, Venezuela, Consul General of the Venezuelan Consulate in Vancouver who holds a degree in journalism and a doctorate in Information Sciences who has stood firmly since an early age in defense of the Bolivarian Revolution speaking about building solidarity with Venezuela; Helen Yaffe, an economic history Fellow at the London School of Economics, author of Che Guevara; The Economics of a Revolution 2009, frequent presenter at conferences and seminars around the world, was skyped in for a videoconference and spoke eloquently and accessibly on the economic history since the Revolution; to name just a few esteemed speakers.

The LGBT panel discussion on Saturday afternoon was extremely well received by the audience as well as the other presenters. The discussion was facilitated by Azza Rojbi, a young lesbian activist from Tunisia, now living in Vancouver, coordinator of Friends of Cuba against the US blockade and director of Vancouver Pride Society. The discussion started with the 40-minute documentary

entitled "Mariela Castro's March: Cuba's LGBT Revolution". It was a moving film emotionally charged with real, raw queer Cuban folks' stories and experiences of discrimination, isolation and violence. To quote one of the older transsexual man in the film, "The revolution was totally homophobic,



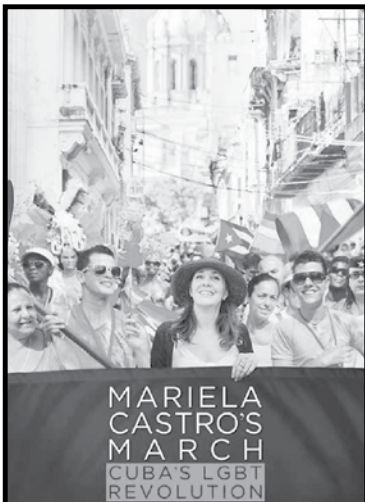
Workshop with US Women & Cuba Collaboration at the Vancouver International Che Guevara Conference (From Left - Azza, Deb & Moon)

no room for Gays..." In the 1960's thousands of gay men were forced into labor camps and doors were closed to them for paid work and education.

Slowly, since the 70's, the Federation of Cuban Women's work on gender and diversity rights, and Cenesex (National Center of Sexual education) grassroots work in sex education and now Mariela Castro's visibility around days against homophobia and transphobia have made great strides in addressing the rights of LGBT Cubans. In fact, Cuba is leading the LGBT rights movement in the entire world!

After the film Azza enthusiastically discussed her experience a year or so ago when she and her partner went to Cuba in May and participated in activities during the Days against homophobia and transphobia and met Mariela Castro who she described as a very humble down-to-earth woman who relates very well to all the people in Cuba. Moon did an excellent job briefly describing the history and work of the US Women and Cuba Collaboration and emphasized the

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Cover of the film "Mariela Castro's March," shown at the International Che Guevara Conference

Balfour Declaration of 1917: A Plan by Imperialists to Partition Palestinian Land



By Max Tennant

Almost one year before the end of World War I in 1918, with the defeat of the Ottoman Empire nearly guaranteed, the British, along with France, were preparing to carve up the Ottoman Empire's Middle Eastern territories for their own interests. The plan was not to create a Jewish "Home Land", but rather to create an imperialist outpost to advance their interests by suppressing and dividing the Middle East and North Africa. The advancement of technology and industrial revolution in Europe and the US necessitated the exploration and plunder of new lands to provide the necessary raw materials for their industrial and technological development. Imperialist countries, namely Britain and France, had their eyes on the immense natural resources, especially oil, of the Middle East and North Africa. Notably, this plan included occupying Palestine with the assistance of the Zionist movement, solely to maintain the flow of needed resources to imperialist countries.

This was made very clear on November 2nd, 1917, 100 years ago, when the Balfour Declaration was written. The Balfour Declaration was a letter sent from the British Foreign Minister, Arthur James Balfour, on behalf of the British cabinet to a prominent Zionist leader in England, Lord Rothschild. This was the first acknowledgement by the British Government of their support of the Zionist cause for a "Jewish" national home in Palestine.

The strongly worded letter clearly states, "His

Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people." This open support by the British Government was not a matter of some kindness towards Jews who were facing strong anti-Semitism, racism and discrimination.

The Balfour Declaration was one of the crucial turning points for the Zionist movement, giving the green light for the creation of the Jewish state in Palestine. From some mere tens of thousands of Jews in Palestine in 1917, to close to a half a million Jews during the UN partitioning plan of Palestine in 1947, the Balfour Declaration was essential in assisting Zionist interests in Palestine. As well, from the 1930s until the creation of Israel on Palestinian land in 1947, many Zionist organizations in Palestine were committing terrorist acts and beginning the groundwork for the theft of Palestinian land.

Let this upcoming 100th anniversary of the Balfour Declaration – the blueprint of the Israeli occupation of Palestine – encourage Jews and all human loving people to, more than ever, increase our efforts for the liberation of Palestine.

It should be noted that at the time of the Balfour Declaration the majority of Jews did not support Zionism or a migration to Palestine. It was primarily the rise of Nazism in Germany in the 1930's and the murder of millions of Jews in the Holocaust that gave the Zionists and imperialist powers the opportunity to use these fascist crimes to cement the creation of Israel. Therefore, from the outset it was a conscious move made

by the British government to use Palestine as a wedge for British, and then later other imperialist countries, to intervene and meddle in the Middle East.

Follow Max Tennant on Twitter:
@MaxTennant

Balfour Declaration

Foreign Office
November 2nd, 1917

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet.

His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation.

Yours,
Arthur James Balfour

Great Victory for the Venezuelan People!

Revolutionary Government of President Maduro Defeats Opposition Decisively!



Campaign rally for revolutionary candidate Héctor Rodríguez, who was elected governor in the state of Miranda

By Alison Bodine

"We are ratifying once again the democratic vocation of the people," "It is not the United States that determines the fate of Venezuela, but the people. We came to seal our commitment to the Constitution." - Venezuelan Vice President Tareck El Aissami, October 15, 2017

On October 15, 2017 the people of Venezuela went to the polls to elect state governors. Revolutionary candidates won in 18 out of the 23 states, a great and decisive victory for the Venezuelan people and the government of President Maduro! These outstanding results, which have shattered the already fractured, violent, and desperate Venezuelan right-wing opposition, are an important step-forward towards advancing the Bolivarian revolutionary process. They have also ignited a new surge of intervention from imperialist countries like the United States and Canada that have, in all irony, taken this electoral victory for the people of Venezuela, and used it to introduce further illegal and cruel sanctions in the name of "democracy."

Venezuela's Regional Elections

Elections in Venezuela are organized and implemented by a branch of government called the National Electoral Council (CNE). This is the governmental body that sets the dates of elections, creates the ballots, determines the eligibility of candidates, as well as announces the outcome, and then further audits the results, among other functions.

Over the last 18 years of the Bolivarian revolutionary process, the CNE has worked with the people of Venezuela to shape one of the most transparent electoral systems in the world. This system includes digital fingerprinting and electronic voting, which is verified by a print-out for each ballot cast.

The October 15, 2017, regional elections were broadly supported throughout Venezuela, with 220 candidates running in the 23 states, and a 61.4% voter turn-out. There were nearly 14,000 voting stations throughout Venezuela. Candidates ran as part of two coalitions, the Grand Patriotic Pole (GPP), which is the coalition of governing revolutionary party of Venezuela, and the MUD, which represents Venezuela's counter-revolutionary opposition.

54% of the over 11 million people that voted that day chose to support the governing party, the PSUV (United Socialist Party of Venezuela), whose candidates won in 18 out of 23 states. The victories of revolutionary candidates in 17 of the 23 states were announced only hours after the polls closed. The winner of the election in the state of Bolívar was decided after a re-count. The revolutionary candidate was also victorious, though with a less than 2000 vote difference.

Despite what is being reported in major capitalist media, there were over 1300 international observers present in Venezuela during the elections, including a delegation from the Latin American Council of Electoral Experts (CEELA). In their report, the President of CEELA stated, "The vote took place peacefully and without problems... the vote reflects the will of [Venezuelan] citizens."

Almost immediately following the announcement of the results of the elections, Venezuela's defeated opposition was broadcasting allegations of electoral fraud all over major capitalist media. To date, not only has the opposition not offered any proof of their allegations, they have also not filed a single official complaint; either the CNE, or even to the Latin American Council of Electoral Experts (CEELA).

Constituent Assembly

At the end of July 2017, the people of Venezuela and the Bolivarian revolutionary process also had another victory with the election

of the National Constituent Assembly (ANC). Over 8 million people in Venezuela elected the ANC, whose 545 members are now working on improving and broadening Venezuela's Constitution in order to strengthen the Bolivarian revolutionary process.

As per Venezuela's Constitution, the Constituent Assembly is now the highest governing body in Venezuela. Therefore, following the regional elections, the victorious candidates were sworn in by the ANC. Four out of the five MUD governors agreed to be sworn in by the ANC, therefore recognizing its legitimacy. In fact, only one of the opposition governors refused to be sworn in by the ANC. Because he refused, there will be a new election in December in the state of Zulia.

Right-Wing Opposition in Venezuela Defeated

The regional elections in Venezuela dealt a decisive blow to the Venezuelan counter-revolutionary opposition. Today, they are weaker than ever, despite the support that they continue to enjoy from the government of the United States, Canada, and the European Union. In the October 15 election, right-wing opposition parties lost 2.2 million votes as compared to the election for the National Assembly in 2015.

As they become further isolated, the right-wing opposition is also increasingly divided, often engaging in public arguments in the media and social media over what each faction thinks is best to do next in order to carry forward their counter-revolutionary agenda. So much for the right-wing's so-called belief in democracy in Venezuela!

Even the Economist magazine, which has been one of the main proponents of the Venezuelan



opposition and foreign intervention in Venezuela, wrote an article which included, "The opposition is directionless and demoralized" in its title. The article, which was published on October 23, went on to state that, "leaders at first responded to the results with stunned silence, then conferred for more than an hour. They emerged to say that the MUD would not recognize the results; they did not make specific allegations of fraud," and "Splits within the MUD have widened," referring especially to those opposition governors that agreed to be sworn into office by the Constituent Assembly.

This election was also a decisive victory against the right-wing opposition's brutal campaign to overthrow the democratically elected government of President Nicolas Maduro. This has included an economic war of hoarding, price gouging and other acts of sabotage that have resulted in shortages of food and basic goods, as well as violent street riots and barricades on the streets of Venezuela that resulted in the deaths of over 120 people between April and July 2017.

For more about the violence and sabotage of the "democratic" and "peaceful" Venezuelan right-wing opposition, read the Fire This Time Interview with the Venezuelan Ambassador to Canada, Wilmer Barrientos, which begins on page 22.

Imperialist Governments Step Up Their Attack

The fracturing of Venezuela's right-wing opposition gives the revolutionary government space to continue advancing the Bolivarian revolutionary process. No one knows that better than imperialist governments that have been working to overthrow the government of Venezuela since Hugo Chavez was first elected in 1998. No doubt that the election made imperialist governments angry and frustrated with the process of their counter-revolutionary work in Venezuela.

With their puppets in Venezuela falling apart, the government of the US and Canada have increased their attacks and sanctions.

For months the U.S. government had been demanding that the government of Venezuela organize regional elections. However, the minute that it is clear that the pro-U.S. candidates have lost, the U.S. government condemns "the lack of free and fair elections yesterday in Venezuela." Continuing with, "The voice of the Venezuelan people was not heard." This statement, issued by the U.S. State Department, goes on to say, "As long as the Maduro regime conducts itself as an

authoritarian dictatorship, we will work with members of the international community and bring the full weight of American economic and diplomatic power to bear in support of the Venezuelan people as they seek to restore their democracy." Didn't the people of Venezuela just finish exercising their democracy?

Canada is also part of the network of imperialist countries that responded rapidly to the U.S. demand for increased attacks and sanctions against Venezuela. Almost immediately following the October 15 elections, Foreign Minister of Canada, Crystia Freeland issued a statement that said, "Sunday's elections were characterized by many irregularities that raise significant and credible concerns regarding the validity of the results." Since when does Canada have the right to make inflammatory statements regarding the electoral process in another, sovereign country without offering a single shred of evidence?



Canada's Record of Illegitimate and Undemocratic Attacks on Venezuela

Canada is part of the imperialist

international community," as reported by Foreign Minister Crystia Freeland.

Make no mistake about it; the government of Canada is not just following the orders of U.S. President Trump when it comes to attacks on Venezuela. They are also protecting their own interests.

In fact, the government of Venezuela has been in the targets of Canada ever since Hugo Chavez was first elected. This is when the Bolivarian revolutionary process began to put the powerful natural resources of Venezuela into the hands of the people of Venezuela. For example, in 2008, the revolutionary government expropriated two Canadian firms, Gold Reserve and Crystallex International Corp. both of which had invested hundreds of millions of dollars into gold mining projects in Venezuela.

A report by the Senate of Canada on Venezuela, issued in July 2017, also sheds light on the government of Canada's interests in Venezuela. These interests have nothing to do with "democracy" and "human rights," and everything to do with making sure that Canada remains competitive in the world financial market. As the report says, "In other respects, the government has become increasingly dependent on financial support from Russia and China in order to sustain the oil industry, giving these two countries an important stake in the future of the Maduro regime."

US/Canada Hands Off Venezuela!

Working class and oppressed people around the world should celebrate the October 15 regional elections as a victory for the people of Venezuela. By voicing their support of the government of President Maduro loud and clear that day, Venezuelans have once again stood up for their right to sovereignty and self-determination in the face of imperialist and right-wing attacks.

Venezuela's violent, counter-revolutionary right-wing is becoming more and more desperate, and in turn, the United States government and their allies will also increase their attacks against Venezuela. As people living in Canada, we must demand stronger than ever that Canada take their hands off Venezuela and cancel the sanctions. We must also call on the United States to end their threats, sanctions and intervention in Venezuela.

*Follow Alison Bodine on Twitter:
@Alisoncolette*

Anti-imperialist march in Caracas, Venezuela - April, 2017 "No to Foreign Intervention"



attack on Venezuela, and this time it seems that they are more coordinated with U.S. attacks on Venezuela than before. Beyond the rhetoric of Canada's Foreign Minister, the government of Canada has also imposed sanctions on Venezuela, as well as opened up Canada to international meetings and visits focusing on promoting foreign intervention.

On October 26, 2017 Canada hosted the third meeting of the Lima Group, a group consisting of representatives from right-wing governments in Latin America and the government of Canada. This meeting concluded: "If necessary we must put added pressure on the Maduro regime by taking concrete steps to further isolate it from the

THE CENTENARY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION 1917-2017



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"We will persevere, with the consensus of our people and especially the patriotic commitment of the youngest Cubans"

Excerpts from the speech by Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, on the "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial, and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba," in United Nations headquarters, New York, November 1, 2017

Mr. President;

Your Excellencies permanent representatives;
Distinguished delegates;

U.S. citizens and Cubans resident in the United States who are present in this hall:

I express the most energetic condemnation of the disrespectful, offensive, and interventionist statements made by the United States Ambassador to the United Nations against Cuba and against the Cuban government, a few minutes ago.

I recall that the United States, where flagrant violations of human rights are committed, of deep concern to the international community, does not have the slightest moral authority to criticize Cuba, a small, solitary country, with an extensive, recognized international record; an honorable, hard-working, and friendly people.

She spoke in the name of the head of an empire that is responsible for most of the wars in progress on the planet today, and which murders innocent people, and is the decisive factor in instability worldwide and the very serious threats to peace and international security, trampling international law and the United Nations Charter, which she has just cynically evoked.

It has not been 55 years, Madam Ambassador, you erred in your first sentence; it has been 26 of these sessions, and more than half a century since the events being discussed today originated.

She lies, uses the same style that predominates in U.S. politics today. This all began before the Cuban nation even existed. When the Cuban people, for the first time rose up in arms in 1868, the appetite for annexation and domination, of what was and is today U.S. imperialism, had already been unleashed.

In 1898, using a pretext - as is characteristic of the modern history of the United States: the explosion of the ship, the Maine, in a Cuban port, they entered as allies of Cuban independence forces and then occupied the country as invaders, and imposed the Platt Amendment, cutting short the independence and sovereignty of Cuba; they conducted three military occupations, imposed 60 years of total domination that ended January 1, 1959, with the entry of the Rebel Army to Havana and the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, that continues to this day carrying on the same struggles that have inspired our people for over 100 years. (Applause)

She lies, she used a phrase, attributing a statement on the so-called October or Missile Crisis to a supposedly Cuban source. I invite her to state the source, to state its author, to present evidence. It sounds like one of the tweets proliferating in this country, in these times of hate, division, and dirty politics. (Applause)

When the Cuban Revolution triumphed, the United States set regime change as its objective. The policy announced by President Trump on June 16 is not new; it is the same policy, it is an old policy anchored in the past. [...]

I speak for my people, and I also speak for those who cannot call President Trump or the U.S. Ambassador by their name, but feel and think like me.

At least she has recognized the total isolation of the United States in this hall and in the world. You are alone on the issue of the blockade of Cuba! (Applause) [...]

Mr. President:

This past June 16, President Donald Trump proclaimed the blockade the fundamental axis of his anti-Cuban policy, and announced a series of measures meant to reinforce it.

In an antiquated, hostile anti-Cuban speech,



reminiscent of the Cold War, and before an auditorium composed, among others, of rancid Batista henchmen, annexationists, and terrorists, the U.S. government returned to worn-out allegations of supposed human rights violations in Cuba to justify the tightening of the blockade. From this podium, heard this morning was his echo, his echo chamber.

President Trump does not have the slightest moral authority to question Cuba.

He leads a government of millionaires who intend to implement brutal measures against the poor and low income families of this country, minorities and immigrants. He follows a program which encourages hate and division, and promotes a dangerous idea of exceptionalism and supremacy disguised as patriotism, and which will lead to more violence. He ignores the will of voters: two thirds of U.S. citizens and Cuban residents in

the United States, as well, support an end to the blockade.

Current U.S. policies harm citizens; corruption reigns in politics which have been hijacked by so-called special interests, that is, by the interests and the money of corporations: no support for education, health, or social security; restrictions on union organizing; and terrible gender-based discrimination.

Deserving of condemnation are the use of torture; police murders of African-Americans; civilian deaths caused by its troops; the indiscriminate, racially motivated death penalty; the murders, repression, and police surveillance of immigrants; the separation of families; the detention and deportation of minors; and the brutal measures threatening the children of undocumented immigrants who grew up and were educated in the United States.

This is the government that lost the popular vote.

The United States Ambassador has expressed her dream. I prefer to repeat that of Martin Luther King, when he said, "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'" Let freedom ring. (Applause)

She has come to tell us that she recognizes that the future of the island rests in the hands of the Cuban people. She is telling an absolute lie. It was never this way, throughout history. It has been a history of domination and hegemony over Cuba.

The announced policy proposes turning back relations to a past of confrontation, to satisfy the spurious interests of extremist circles within the U.S. right and a frustrated, aging, minority of Cuban origin in Florida. The Presidential Memorandum establishing the policy toward Cuba includes, among other measures, new prohibitions on economic, commercial, and financial relations between U.S. companies and Cuban enterprises.

It additionally restricts the freedom to travel of U.S. citizens with the elimination of individual trips under the so-called category of "people-to-people" exchanges, and increased surveillance for the rest of visitors from that country.

In recent weeks, President Donald Trump has reiterated on four separate occasions, (including before this Assembly this past September), that his government will not lift the blockade on Cuba unless it makes changes to its internal order.

Today I reiterate that Cuba will never accept preconditions or impositions and we remind the President and his Ambassador that this approach, applied by a dozen of his predecessors, has never and will never work. It will be just one more example of a policy

anchored in the past. [...]

Mr. President:

Cuba presents today, for the 26th consecutive time before the United Nations General Assembly, the draft resolution (entitled) "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba."

In the current situation, this text acquires special relevance in the face of the setback that the actions of the new government of the United States against Cuba signal.

The blockade constitutes the greatest obstacle to the country's economic and social development and the implementation of the National Plan, in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda. It is the main obstacle to the development of economic, commercial, and financial relations between Cuba and the United States and the rest of the world.

According to calculations rigorously conducted by Cuban institutions, the blockade caused, in the year from April 2016 to April 2017, losses to the Cuban economy on the order of 4.305 billion dollars.

This figure is about double what would be needed as annual direct foreign investment for the Cuban economy to advance substantially toward development.

The accumulated damages reached the enormous figure of 822.280 billion dollars, calculated considering the devaluation of the U.S. dollar vis-à-vis the price of gold. At current prices, this is the equivalent of 130.178 billion dollars.

Dozens of banks in third countries have been affected in the last period by the extreme and tenacious persecution of Cuban financial transactions.

The blockade is contrary to International Law and its aggressively extraterritorial application damages the sovereignty of all states. It also harms economic and business interests in all latitudes.

Mr. President:



The Ambassador of the United States failed to mention that the blockade is a flagrant, massive, and systematic violation of the human rights of Cubans, and constitutes an act of genocide under the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. It is also an obstacle to the international cooperation that Cuba provides in humanitarian areas to 81 countries of the South.

The human damages caused by the application of this policy are incalculable. There is not a Cuban family or social service in Cuba that does not suffer the deprivations and consequences of the blockade. Cuban émigrés also suffer discrimination and prejudices. [...]

Mr. President:

continued on page 31

* EN ESPAÑOL *

Señor Presidente;

Excelentísimos señores Representantes Permanentes;

Distinguidos delegados:

Ciudadanos norteamericanos y cubanos residentes en los Estados Unidos que se encuentran en esta sala:

Expreso la más enérgica condena a las declaraciones irrespetuosas, ofensivas e injerencistas de la Embajadora de los Estados Unidos ante las Naciones Unidas contra Cuba y contra el gobierno cubano hace pocos minutos proferidas.

Le recuerdo que los Estados Unidos, donde se cometen flagrantes violaciones de los derechos humanos que suscitan profunda preocupación de la comunidad internacional, no tienen ni la más mínima autoridad moral para criticar a Cuba, un país pequeño, solidario, de amplia y reconocida trayectoria internacional; un pueblo noble, trabajador y amistoso.

Habla ella a nombre del Jefe de un imperio que es responsable de la mayor parte de las guerras que se libran hoy en el planeta y que asesinan inocentes, y es el factor decisivo de inestabilidad mundial y de gravísimas amenazas a la paz y a la seguridad internacional, pisoteando el Derecho Internacional y la Carta de las Naciones Unidas que cínicamente ella acaba de invocar.

No han sido 55 años, señora Embajadora, se equivoca en su primera frase, han sido 26 de estas sesiones y más de un siglo del origen de los hechos que hoy se discuten.

Ella miente, usa el mismo estilo que prevalece hoy en la política estadounidense. Todo empezó antes de que existiera, incluso, la Nación cubana. Cuando el pueblo cubano por vez primera se alza en armas en 1868, ya se habían desatado los apetitos anexionistas y de dominación de lo que era y es hoy el imperialismo estadounidense.



"Persistiremos, con el consenso de nuestro pueblo y especialmente el compromiso patriótico de los cubanos más jóvenes"

Extracto del discurso del ministro de Relaciones Exteriores de Cuba, Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, bajo el tema «Necesidad de poner fin al bloqueo económico, comercial y financiero impuesto por los Estados Unidos de América contra Cuba», en la sede de las Naciones Unidas, Nueva York, el 1ro. de noviembre de 2017.



En 1898, usando un pretexto —como caracteriza a la historia moderna de los Estados Unidos—: la voladura del buque Maine en puerto cubano, entraron como aliados de las fuerzas independentistas cubanas y ocuparon el país después como invasores, impusieron la Enmienda Platt, cercenaron la independencia y la soberanía de Cuba; tres ocupaciones militares realizaron, impusieron 60 años de dominio absoluto que terminó el Primero de Enero de 1959 con la entrada del Ejército Rebelde en La Habana y el triunfo de la Revolución Cubana, que hasta hoy libra las mismas luchas que inspiraron a nuestro pueblo hace más de 100 años (Aplausos).

Ella miente, ha usado una frase, supuestamente atribuyendo a una fuente

cubana una afirmación sobre la llamada Crisis de Octubre o de los Misiles, que invito a que diga su fuente, a que diga su autor, a que presente evidencias. Parece un twit de los que proliferan en este país en estos tiempos de odio, división y política sucia (Aplausos).

Al triunfo de la Revolución Cubana, el gobierno de los Estados Unidos fijó como objetivo el cambio de régimen. No es nueva la política enunciada por el presidente Trump el 16 de junio, es la misma política, es una vieja política anclada en el pasado. [...]

Hablo por mi pueblo, y hablo también por los que no pueden llamar al presidente Trump y a la Embajadora de los Estados Unidos por sus nombres, pero sienten y piensan como yo. Al menos ha reconocido ella el absoluto aislamiento de los Estados Unidos en esta sala y en este mundo. ¡Están solos en el tema del bloqueo a Cuba! (Aplausos.)

[...]

Señor Presidente:

El pasado 16 de junio el presidente Donald Trump proclamó al bloqueo como un eje fundamental de su política anticubana y anunció un grupo de medidas dirigidas a su endurecimiento.

En un discurso anticuado y hostil, propio de la Guerra Fría, y ante un auditorio compuesto, entre otros, por rancios batistianos, anexionistas y terroristas, el gobernante estadounidense retomó gastadas alegaciones sobre supuestas violaciones de los derechos humanos en Cuba para justificar el fortalecimiento del bloqueo. En este podio se ha escuchado esta mañana a su eco, a su caja de resonancia.

El presidente Trump no tiene la menor autoridad moral para cuestionar a Cuba. Preside un gobierno de millonarios destinado a aplicar medidas salvajes contra las familias de menos ingresos y los pobres de este país, las minorías y los inmigrantes. Sigue un programa que alienta el odio y la división. Pregonar un peligroso excepcionalismo y supremacismo, disfrazado de patriotismo, que provocará más violencia. Ignora la voluntad de los electores: dos tercios de los estadounidenses y también de los cubanos residentes en los Estados Unidos apoyan el

fin del bloqueo.

Las políticas vigentes en los Estados Unidos dañan a los ciudadanos, impera la corrupción de la política, secuestrada por los llamados «intereses especiales», es decir, los intereses y el dinero corporativos; la falta de garantías de educación, salud y seguridad social, las restricciones a la sindicalización y la discriminación terrible de género.

Merecen condena el uso de la tortura, el asesinato de afroamericanos por la policía, las muertes de civiles por sus tropas, el uso indiscriminado y racialmente diferenciado de la pena de muerte, el asesinato, la represión y vigilancia policial de inmigrantes, la separación de familias y la detención o deportación de menores y las medidas brutales con que amenaza a los hijos de inmigrantes ilegales que crecieron y se educaron en los Estados Unidos.

Es el gobierno que perdió el voto popular.

La Embajadora de los Estados Unidos nos ha expresado su sueño. Yo prefiero repetir el de Martin Luther King, cuando dijo: Sueño que un día esta nación se levantará y vivirá el verdadero significado de su credo. Todos los hombres son creados iguales. Que repique la libertad (Aplausos).

Ha venido a decirnos que ella reconoce que el futuro de la Isla descansa en las manos del pueblo cubano. Miente rotundamente, jamás fue así en toda la historia. Es la historia del intento de la dominación y la hegemonía sobre Cuba.

La política anunciada, se propone retrotraer las relaciones a un pasado de confrontación para satisfacer espurios intereses de círculos extremistas de la derecha estadounidense y de una frustrada y envejecida minoría de origen cubano en la Florida.

El Memorando Presidencial estableciendo la política hacia Cuba, incluye, entre otras medidas, nuevas prohibiciones a las relaciones económicas, comerciales y financieras de compañías estadounidenses con empresas cubanas. Restringe adicionalmente la libertad de viajar de los ciudadanos estadounidenses con la eliminación de los viajes individuales en la categoría de intercambios llamados «pueblo a pueblo», y medidas de vigilancia sobre el resto de los visitantes de ese país.

En las últimas semanas, el presidente Donald Trump ha reiterado en cuatro ocasiones diferentes, (incluyendo ante esta Asamblea el pasado mes de septiembre,) que su gobierno no levantará el bloqueo a Cuba a menos que esta realice cambios en su ordenamiento interno.

Reafirmo hoy que Cuba jamás aceptará condicionamientos ni imposiciones y le recordamos al Presidente y a su Embajadora que este enfoque, aplicado por una decena

de sus predecesores, nunca ha funcionado ni va a funcionar. Será uno más en la cuenta de una política anclada en el pasado. [...]

Señor Presidente:

Cuba presenta hoy por vigésima sexta ocasión consecutiva ante la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas el proyecto de resolución (titulado) «Necesidad de poner fin al bloqueo económico, comercial y financiero impuesto por los Estados Unidos de América contra Cuba».

En la actual coyuntura, este texto cobra especial relevancia frente al retroceso que significan las acciones del nuevo gobierno de los Estados Unidos contra Cuba.

El bloqueo constituye el mayor obstáculo para el desarrollo económico y social del país y para la implementación del Plan Nacional, en línea con la Agenda 2030 de las Naciones Unidas. Es el principal escollo para el desarrollo de las relaciones económicas, comerciales y financieras de Cuba con los Estados Unidos y el resto del mundo.

Según los cálculos realizados de forma rigurosa por instituciones cubanas, el bloqueo causó, en el año transcurrido desde abril de 2016 hasta abril de 2017, pérdidas a la economía cubana en el orden de 4 305 millones de dólares.

Esa cifra es alrededor del doble de lo que se necesitaría como inversión extranjera directa anual para que la economía cubana pueda avanzar sustancialmente hacia el desarrollo.

Los daños acumulados alcanzan la enorme cifra de 822 280 millones de dólares, calculados tomando en cuenta la depreciación del oro. A precios corrientes, equivalen a 130 178 millones de dólares.

Decenas de bancos de terceros países han sido afectados en el último periodo por la extrema y tenaz persecución de las transacciones financieras cubanas.

El bloqueo es contrario al Derecho



Internacional y su aplicación agresivamente extraterritorial daña la soberanía de todos los Estados. También lesiona los intereses económicos y empresariales en todas las latitudes.

Señor Presidente:

La Embajadora de los Estados Unidos omitió mencionar que el bloqueo constituye una violación flagrante, masiva y sistemática de los derechos humanos de las cubanas y cubanos y califica como acto de genocidio a tenor de la Convención para la Prevención y Sanción del Delito de Genocidio de 1948. Es también un obstáculo para la cooperación internacional que Cuba brinda en áreas humanitarias a 81 países del Sur.

Resultan incalculables los daños humanos que ha producido la aplicación de esta política. No hay familia cubana ni servicio social en Cuba que no sufra las privaciones y consecuencias del bloqueo. La emigración cubana sufre también discriminación y perjuicios. [...]

Señor Presidente:

Agradecemos profundamente a todos los gobiernos y pueblos, parlamentos, fuerzas políticas y movimientos sociales, representantes de la sociedad civil,

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Interview with the Venezuelan
Ambassador to Canada, His Excellency
Wilmer Omar Barrientos Fernández.

**" We are in a permanent
battle to reverse the
sad inheritance of
interventionism and the
imperialist plunder of
countries of the region. "**

Interview & Translation
By Alison Bodine

*Interview by Fire This Time (FTT) with the
Venezuelan Ambassador to Canada, His Excellency
Wilmer Omar Barrientos Fernández.*

Fire This Time: Thank you for doing this interview with us, at such a critical moment for Venezuela and Venezuela solidarity. What is the most important and burning issue for Venezuela today? Is it the economy, with challenges such as inflation and sanctions or, is it the politics, with challenges such as corruption, reactionaries and the right-wing?

Amb. Barrientos: Venezuela lives in a transcendental historical moment; a decisive historical stage for the continuity of progressive, free, independent and sovereign governmental management, one without ties to the neoliberal postulates. Venezuela lives a true democracy, whose center is the human being and for that reason it is participative and protagonist. We are in a permanent battle to reverse the sad inheritance of interventionism and the imperialist plunder of countries of the region. Venezuela is part of the peoples of *Nuestramérica* (Our America) who keep their conscience intact despite the abuses and offenses committed. The Venezuelan people have resisted and do not accept any lessening of their status as a free, sovereign and independent nation.

Faced with this strength, reflected in the successful process of convening, electing and inaugurating the National Constituent Assembly, imperial threats - including military ones - have been increased. Unilateral and illegal economic sanctions have been imposed with the aim of establishing a diplomatic siege against Venezuela. This shows the despair of hegemonic power centers in the face of recurrent failures in their destabilization attempts that aim to overthrow a constitutionally elected president and that also aim to dismount, dismantle or wipe out any vestige of the process initiated by Chávez and guided by Simón Bolívar's ideals of freedom and justice.

Certainly, the United States has increased its interventionist escalation against Venezuela. On August 11, 2017, US president Donald Trump threatened, without euphemism, military intervention as an option for the most aggressive, warmongering and armed empire in the history of mankind. On August 25, 2017, the Trump administration continued its onslaught by issuing an executive order for the fifth round of sanctions against Venezuela. This greatly affects our ability to conduct financial transactions with individuals or institutions with operations in the United States. Such economic sanctions are contributing to the creation of a deep crisis that causes most dispossessed to suffer more rigorously.

These measures have been adopted in the name of an alleged interest to help the people of Venezuela. However, they are really hypocritical actions as they seek to deepen the economic crisis in order to turn it into a humanitarian crisis and affect the popular sectors, which are the majority in Venezuela as well as the main supports for the Bolivarian Revolution.

Fortunately, in addition to the categorical rejection of all these actions, our government has seen these imperial attacks as an opportunity to free us from the domination of the dollar. President Maduro has adopted a series of measures to counteract its pernicious effects on our economy. The most emblematic has been the implementation of a basket of currencies in order to be able to use the currencies of several emerging countries in our external financial relations. The successful tour recently conducted by President Nicolás Maduro confirmed that Venezuela is not alone and has the support of several States with which we maintain a strategic partnership or have an in-progress bilateral cooperation framework.

We know that the United States is not alone in its interventionist aspirations and alleged guardianship over Venezuela. Washington has called on all its allies to follow their path with similar sanctions. Regrettably, among them, there are many countries in Latin America

which the United States can practically order-around. Unfortunately, Canada has also imitated this behavior in violation of International Law and on September 22, 2017, adopted similar measures that disrupt the bonds of friendship. They say it is to help the Venezuelan people, but it is that same people who ultimately suffer the most damage. With its decision, Canada had disregarded the framework of respect that we have maintained for almost 70 years of uninterrupted relations. With its actions, Canada has also showed no independence from US tutelage, as they preach. Canada does not show authentic and true leadership in Latin America and with these types of positions they will never achieve it.

Evidently, the large media corporations have given another nuance to these illegal actions. They maintain their media campaign that distorts reality and discredits Venezuela internationally, as part of their systemic protection of the interests of the global hegemonic power in order to guarantee the permanence of their alleged global domination.

In their strategy, these transnational media corporations have also spread an image throughout the world that Venezuela is a country in bankruptcy and with an insurmountable economic crisis. With the imposition of unilateral and illegal sanctions, the international financial war has deepened. These are actions that, together with the breakdown of the oil rentier model and the internal economic war, have destabilized the Venezuelan economy, sharpening the scarcity of basic products and hitting the most vulnerable people. Among other measures, the Bolivarian Government has promoted a plan for the diversification of the economy whose effects will be seen in the medium and long term. To meet the immediate needs of the people, the Local Supply and Production Committees (CLAP) were created. CLAPs are a new form of popular organization that directly benefit 6 million families through the distribution, house by house, of more of 60,000 tons of food each week, a reach that

continues to grow.

They have also wanted to brand us as a dictatorial government that is disrespectful of human rights. Venezuela is working on this matter and our efforts have been recognized in various international forums. For example, in the last Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council of the United Nations, Venezuela was better evaluated than the United States. In Venezuela there is full freedom of expression; people can say what they want. In the case of the accusations of the existence of alleged political prisoners, citizens or leaders detained, and even deprived of their liberty, have been found guilty of violating domestic laws by competent judicial bodies.

Our government is working hard to solve a historical problem, which is the product of an oil rentier system, as is corruption. Today these problems have become more visible, because during the 40 years of representative democracy they were hiding them to the benefit of an exclusive and classist elite.

FTT: I would also like to ask you about the National Constituent Assembly, what is your evaluation of the process so far?

Amb. Barrientos: The National Constituent Assembly is already a political-legal reality. It is a faithful reflection of the sovereign will, of

the firm dignity of a people with a clear political conscience, a bastion of Latin American resistance.

Since this election, on July 30, 2017, and the inauguration of this original power, on August 4, 2017, Venezuela has returned to normal by ending violent demonstrations. There is a climate of peace and civic tranquility. The National Constituent Assembly is an instrument of peace and dialogue, and its convocation by President Nicolás Maduro was always in-line with the Constitution, our legal framework. Anyone who knows our constitutional text knows that the Constituent Assembly is an element included in it. His call was aimed at restoring national peace, privileging respect and political tolerance, against the generalized violence that the Venezuelan opposition has tried to impose and also against growing imperial interference led by the United States, and seconded by Canada.

The election of the National Constituent Assembly was a successful process for all of Venezuelan society. The National Assembly was supported by more than 8 million Venezuelans, whose only desire is to live in peace and to be able to determine the destiny of their own country, rejecting any external interference. In this way, the Venezuela people are maintaining and deepening the social gains achieved since the beginning of the Bolivarian Revolution under the leadership of Commander Hugo

Chávez.

Since this power was installed, we observe that in response, the imperialist powers have intensified the siege against Venezuela, increasing their attacks, threats and abject interference.

FTT: What do you think we should do to build a stronger solidarity movement with Venezuela and the Bolivarian revolutionary process here in Canada?

Amb. Barrientos: It is fundamental that people have a clear conscience that in Venezuela there is no dictatorship; that democracy is not deteriorating, but that a true democracy is deepening. Tell the truth and counteract the virtual lies against Venezuela created by those that have the aspiration to seize the immense riches of the country.

Today more than ever we must create a great network of solidarity to be interconnected and denounce the onslaught of the imperial powers against Venezuelan sovereignty. Venezuela is the central target of the attacks of the hegemonic centers against progressive countries and, if Venezuela falls, it would be a hard blow for all the free peoples of the world. We must not allow this event to become a reality.

FTT: Thank you for your time.

" Nos encontramos en una batalla permanente para revertir la triste herencia de intervencionismo y expoliación imperialista de los países de la región "



*** EN ESPAÑOL ***

Entrevista
Por Alison Bodine

Entrevista por Fire This Time (FTT) con el embajador de Venezuela en Canadá, Su Excelencia Wilmer Omar Barrientos Fernández.

Fire This Time: Gracias por hacer esta entrevista con nosotros, en un momento tan crítico para Venezuela y el movimiento de solidaridad con Venezuela. ¿Cuál es el asunto más importante y urgente para Venezuela hoy? ¿Es la economía, con retos como la inflación y las sanciones o, es la política, con retos como la corrupción, los reaccionarios y la derecha?

Sr. Barrientos: Venezuela vive un momento histórico transcendental. Es una etapa histórica decisiva para la continuidad de una gestión gubernamental progresista, libre, independiente y soberana, y sin ataduras a los postulados neoliberales. Venezuela vive una verdadera democracia, cuyo centro es el ser humano y por eso es participativa y protagónica. Nos encontramos en una batalla permanente para revertir la triste herencia de intervencionismo y expoliación imperialista de los países de la región, y Venezuela es parte de los pueblos de Nuestra América que mantienen su conciencia intacta sobre los abusos y atropellos cometidos. El pueblo venezolano ha resistido y no acepta menoscabo alguno de su condición de nación libre, soberana e independiente.

Ante esta firmeza, reflejado con el exitoso proceso de convocatoria, elección e instalación de la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente, se han acrecentado las amenazas imperiales -incluso militares, y se han impuesto sanciones económicas unilaterales e ilegales, pretendiendo establecer un cerco diplomático contra Venezuela, como muestra del desespero de los centros de poder hegemónicos ante los fracasos recurrentes en sus intentos de desestabilización para derrocar a un presidente

constitucionalmente electo y desmontar, desmantelar o arrasar cualquier vestigio del proceso iniciado por Chávez, y que ha tenido como guía el ideal de libertad y justicia de Simón Bolívar.

Ciertamente, Estados Unidos ha aumentado su escalada intervencionista contra Venezuela, pues el 11 de agosto de 2017, el mandatario estadounidense, Donald Trump, amenazó, sin eufemismo, con una intervención militar como una de las opciones que maneja el imperio más agresivo, guerrerrista y armamentista en la historia de la humanidad. El 25 de agosto de 2017, la administración Trump prosiguió con su arremetida emitiendo una orden ejecutiva con la quinta ronda de sanciones contra Venezuela, afectando marcadamente nuestra capacidad para realizar transacciones financieras con personas o instituciones con operaciones en Estados Unidos, dichas sanciones económicas sí están contribuyendo a crear una profunda crisis que la sufren con mayor rigurosidad los sectores más desposeídos.

Estas medidas las han adoptado en nombre de un supuesto interés para ayudar al pueblo de Venezuela, pero realmente son

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for Sex Education (CENESEX), and Mariela Castro, a member of Cuban parliament and Cuban President Raul Castro's daughter. The moving film was followed by talks from: Azza Rojbi, a North African LGBTQ+ organizer in Vancouver and coordinator of Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade-Vancouver; Moon Vázquez, a Latina Lesbian Feminist on the national steering committee of the U.S. Women & Cuba Collaboration; and Deb Goldman, also an organizer with the U.S. Women & Cuba Collaboration from Seattle, Washington. All three women spoke about their experiences visiting with organizers in the queer community in Cuba. Each shared moving personal anecdotes illustrating the important struggles and victories of LGBTQ+ people in Cuba.

After a dynamic day covering many topics, it was time for the session on, "Marxism, Communism and the Relevancy of Revolutionary Ideas Today." This special session was organized to mark one year since the passing of Fidel Castro, 50 years after Che's Assassination & 100 years after the triumph of the Russian Revolution. It featured four speakers: Tamara Hansen, coordinator of VCSC and author of the book "50 Decades of the Cuban Revolution: The Challenges of an Unwavering Leadership" (Battle of Ideas Press, 2010); Henry Heller, Professor of History at the University of Manitoba and Marxist scholar; Tania Lopez Larroque, Consul General of the Cuban Consulate in Toronto; and Luis Morlote Rivas, Vice-President of the Cuban Union of Writers and Artists (UNEAC) and a member of the Cuban National Assembly, visiting from Havana, Cuba. Each speaker reflected on revolutionary history and struggle, as well as the role of revolutionaries today to continue learning, organizing, and building towards a better world. There were many comments from the floor and the evening wrapped up with ongoing discussions and plans to return Sunday morning to continue and deepen the discussions, and debates of the 7th International Che Guevara Conference.

SUNDAY OCTOBER 29, 2017

Day 2 of speakers, workshops, discussion & revolutionary politics!

The conference was honoured to open the stage Sunday morning to Chief Bob Chamberlin, Vice-President Union of BC Indian Chiefs and Elected Chief Coun-

cilior Kwikwasut'inuxw Haxwa'mis First Nation, who brought special greetings. As a conference addressing many issues around building a better world, he reminded the audience that any discussions on change in Canada must take into consideration the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP), and build towards equality, justice, and respect for Indigenous people and their land rights.

Soon after, the conference welcomed Arnold August, journalist and author of many books including: "Cuba and Its Neighbours: Democracy in Motion" (Fernwood Publishing/Zed Books, 2013) and "Cuba-U.S. Relations: Obama and Beyond" (Fernwood, 2017). Arnold gave the Sunday opening keynote address on "Cuba-U.S. Relations: Obama and Beyond." He explained the policy of U.S. imperialism towards Cuba from Cuba's independence from Spain, to today under President Trump, in a wide-ranging and educational talk. He also explained the importance of the ongoing campaign against the U.S. blockade on Cuba and encouraged people to join efforts across Quebec and Canada to end this unjust U.S. policy.

The fourth workshop was led by Helen Yaffe, an Economic History Fellow at the London School of Economics and author of "Che Guevara: The Economics of Revolution" (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009) who joined via video conference from London, England. She spoke on the main themes of her book, as well as many updates related to the economic and social guidelines of 2011. Helen's ability to break down the complex economic ideas of Che Guevara and their implementation was a

highlight for many at the conference.

After enjoying lunch prepared by a local Cuban chef, everyone came back for the fifth workshop, "Cuba's 2011 Economic & Social Guidelines: The gains and challenges today." Led by Luis Morlote Rivas, Vice-President of the Cuban Union of Writers and Artists (UNEAC) and a member of the Cuban National Assembly. He who spoke about the changes brought by Cuba's social and economic guidelines, both positive and negative. Luis outlined many examples of how the government and parliament is consulting with the Cuban people and listening to their



feedback to make further changes and adjustments, while continuing on the path of socialism.

The sixth workshop titled, “Cuba and Its Neighbours: Democracy in Motion” featured Arnold August who returned to the stage to speak on the themes of his second book – Cuba’s electoral system and Cuba’s role in Latin America and the world. Arnold gave a detailed explanation of Cuba’s democratic electoral system and the role of the Communist Party of Cuba in Cuban society. The workshop was followed by a chance for everyone to buy

copies of Arnold’s books and have them signed by the author!

For the seventh workshop, the conference was grateful for the presence of the Venezuelan Consul General of Vancouver, Wilfredo Perez Bianco, who spoke on the issue of “Building Solidarity with Venezuela Today.” Wilfredo specifically looked at the power of the ALBA alliance between Cuba and Venezuela and its grassroots associations of ALBA-TCP. He outlined what unity amongst poor and oppressed people has been able to accomplish, as well as the heavy attacks the Venezuelan government is facing today, and the need for international solidarity.

The final workshop was followed by the closing keynote address, which was on the theme of the conference, “From the Russian Revolution to the Cuban Revolution: The Question of Leadership, Implementing the Socialist Project & Where We Are Today.” The presenter was Ali Yerevani, political editor of the Fire This Time Newspaper. Ali explained, “We oppressed people, we working people, we must look at ourselves with more confidence. With more understanding that we need to work together in a united way in order to bring back what we accomplished and what we established with the Russian Revolution of 1917 and Cuban Revolution of 1959.” With these inspiring words, many of the threads and ideas discussed throughout the conference became more concrete and tangible.

As the conference drew to a close, Thomas Davies, executive member of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC), gave an impassioned conference summary appealing to the audience to get involved in building solidarity and a movement for change.

One of the most powerful moments of the conference was the Indigenous closing featuring Kelly White, Coast Salish elder; Martin Sparrow, of Musqueam nation; Shona Shutter, of Okanagan nation; and Vivian Sandy, of the Shuswap and Northern Diné nations. Martin Sparrow shared a new born song to unite Indigenous people around the world, encouraging other peoples to also support their struggles. The three Cuban guests, Tania Lopez Larroque, Gerardo Alfonso, and Luis Morlote Rivas, were gifted beautiful star blankets recognizing the medicine wheel and four directions. Kelly White invited each guest at the conference to join in a circle with the Cuban guests and thank them for their participation. She concluded chanting, “In the spirit of Indigenous peoples’ right to life, We Will Win against the enemy to our peace! Viva! To those who are the enemy to our peace, we don’t know how to quit, we have no words for surrender! Viva our next 7 generations!” As the 7th International Che Guevara Conference came to a close, Tamara Hansen thanked Kelly, Shona, Vivian and Martin for their strong and memorable closing.

With over 350 people in attendance over three days, as well as 161 live stream participants, over 450 views on Youtube, and a diversity of revolutionary topics and themes discussed, the Che Guevara Conference was an important success. The conference featured many prominent guests from Cuba, Venezuela, the Middle East, Africa, England, the U.S., and Canada, including many speakers representing those who are traditionally underrepresented in political discourse: Indigenous people, people of colour, LGBTQ+ people, young people, and women. Now is the time to join together and continue building towards the better world we know is possible, and necessary!

For further photos, reports, and videos of the 7th International Che Guevara Conference: www.chequevaraconference.ca

*Follow Tamara Hansen on Twitter:
@THans01*



Clockwise both pages: Ali Yerevani’s closing keynote address; Wendy Holm’s workshop on Cuba and Sustainability; Luis Morlote Rivas’ workshop on Cuba’s 2011 guidelines; Gerardo Alfonso’s workshop on music and race in Cuba; Wilfredo Perez Bianco’s workshop on Venezuela solidarity; and Arnold August signing his books.

WWW.CHEGUEVARACONFERENCE.CA

By Janine Solanki

November 1, 2017 marked the annual vote in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) against the unjust U.S. blockade on Cuba. For 26 years the world has voted increasingly in support of Cuba in favour of the resolution condemning the US blockade on Cuba. This year the vote was overwhelmingly against the blockade of Cuba with 191 votes in favour of the resolution, and just two, the U.S. and Israel voting against the resolution. For almost 60 years the U.S. blockade on Cuba has put enormous strain on Cuba's economy to the tune of over 1.3 trillion dollars in damages. The blockade has prevented Cuba from having access to everything from vital medicines to construction supplies, which is especially pressing after the recent destructive hurricanes. While U.S. President Obama made some positive first steps towards normalizing relations, the blockade has remained in place and U.S. President Trump has rolled back some of the progresses, including restricting U.S. citizens from traveling to Cuba.

Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) and Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade – Vancouver (FCAB-Van) united with groups in solidarity with Cuba around the world, for an international day of action against the criminal U.S. blockade on Cuba. With U.S. President Trump's increasing threats and attacks on Cuba, organizing this international day of action came at a critical time!

In Vancouver, Canada, actions began with a book launch of "Cuba-U.S. Relations: Obama and Beyond" by author Arnold August. The event was organized by the People's Coop Bookstore and Fernwood Publishing, with the endorsement of VCSC and FCAB-Van. The Montreal-based author, journalist and lecturer Arnold August introduced this valuable book to Vancouver readers and spoke on Trump's policy against Cuba and the long history of U.S. hostilities towards Cuba. Earlier in the day, VCSC and FCAB-Van also arranged for visits to local high



VANCOUVER STANDS WITH CUBA ON INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ACTION AGAINST U.S. BLOCKADE

schools with Arnold August, where he was able to talk to students about US-Cuba relations and the vote at the United Nations condemning the U.S. blockade on Cuba.

In the evening, VCSC and FCAB-Van co-organized a cultural evening against the U.S. blockade on Cuba, at the Roundhouse Community Center in Downtown Vancouver. The event started out with a welcoming drumming and song from Indigenous elder Eagle Eyes. The audience was treated to the music of South African singer/songwriter Bouna Verdere Jabu, accompanied by guitarist Tony Chotem. The audience then heard from the legendary Cuban musician Gerardo Alfonso, on his last day in Vancouver before returning home to Cuba. Between performing his incredible Nueva Trova songs, Gerardo expressed his appreciation to be part of this event standing in solidarity with his country against the unjust policies of the U.S. government. The evening had another special

element, which was to celebrate Gerardo Alfonso's birthday! As Gerardo wrapped up last song, organizers surprised him with a cake lite with candles, and the audience joined in singing happy birthday.

Another special guest at the event was Arnold August, who spoke and shared a statement of greetings and solidarity in both French and English from the organization La Table de Concertation de Solidarité Québec-Cuba (La TCSQ-C). La TCSQ-C in Montreal organizes monthly picket actions in front of the U.S. Consulate against the U.S. blockade on Cuba, in coordination with the Vancouver picket actions on the 17th of each month organized by FCAB-Van and other (and growing!) cities.

The over 45 people in attendance were reminded by event host Tamara Hansen, coordinator of VCSC, that they were standing alongside people around the world against the cruel and immoral U.S. blockade on Cuba, in a united and coordinated international day of action. Participants were referred to the website <http://www.us-cubanormalization.org> to see other cities organizing against the U.S. blockade on Cuba.

Lift the Blockade on Cuba!
Cuba si! Bloqueo no!

Follow Janine Solanki on Twitter:
[@janinesolanki](https://twitter.com/janinesolanki)



continued from page 11

their homelands uninhabitable.

For Afghanistan, the situation has become increasingly worse. By September 2017 was shaping up to be the deadliest year on record for Afghan civilians since the 2001 invasion, according to The Guardian newspaper. A record number of civilians, 1,662 – were killed in the first six months of 2017, a 2% increase from the same period last year. An additional 3,581 civilians were wounded. These numbers were released in a report by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. This increase came with a 23% rise in the number of women killed, and child deaths were up 9% compared with the same period last year.

The war in Afghanistan is not winding down after 16 years – on June 13, 2017, U.S. President Trump announced the U.S. would be sending nearly 4000 additional troops to Afghanistan, to be joined by 3000 additional forces promised by NATO. This will bring the total troop number to nearly 20,000 in Afghanistan.

To protest the continuing war and occupation in Afghanistan, leading antiwar organizers in the U.S. called for International Days of Action October 2nd to 8th. In Vancouver, Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) answered this call and organized for a rally and petition campaign on October 7th, in Downtown Vancouver. The rally opened with a welcoming song and drumming from Eagle Eyes, an Indigenous activist and hereditary chief from Sechelt. MAWO Chair Alison Bodine led the crowd in chants of “US Hands Off Afghanistan!” and emceed the program, as well as announced a new MAWO petition against the U.S. war and occupation in Afghanistan, highlighting the recent U.S. troop increase in Afghanistan. MAWO executive committee Janine Solanki spoke on the role Canada has played, from 2001 onwards, in the war and occupation of Afghanistan, and how Canada continues as an imperialist player in this new era of war and occupation. David Whittlesey, MAWO organizer and long-time antiwar activist since the Vietnam war, also spoke and encouraged people to keep up organizing and protesting against war.

Following the program, activists approached passers-by who stopped to add their signature to the petition against the U.S. in Afghanistan. Local news radio station News1130 also came to cover the rally and reflected the protest online and over the radio.

While this month's rally was

especially important to mark the anniversary of the war on Afghanistan, MAWO has organized an antiwar rally and petition campaign every month since MAWO formed. October 2017 also marked MAWO's 14-year anniversary, and since MAWO started organizing on October 29th, 2003 MAWO has been constantly expanding and finding more communities and organizations to unite with against war with both locally and internationally. MAWO continues to stand by the cornerstones of organizing, educating and mobilizing with creativity, consistency and, as demonstrated in organizing on this international day of action, also with coordination. Now more than ever is a critical time to be organizing against the expanding new era of war and occupation, and MAWO encourages more antiwar groups and peace-loving people to come together against war and occupation.

For more information on upcoming MAWO events and actions visit www.mawovancouver.org, find MAWO on Facebook or follow on Twitter @mawovan. To see the full list of endorsers of the International Days of Action and for information about events in other cities across the United States visit: www.notowar.net

U.S. Out of Afghanistan Now!
No to War and Occupation! Yes to Self-Determination!

*Follow Janine Solanki on Twitter:
@janinesolanki*

**U.S./SAUDI ARABIA
HANDS OFF YEMEN!**
#EndYemenSiege
LIFT THE BLOCKADE ON YEMEN!



FRIDAY NOVEMBER 17
LIVE MUSIC & CULTURAL EVENT
7PM - CANUCKS ROOM @
BRITANNIA COMMUNITY CENTRE
(1655 WILLIAM ST. VANCOUVER)
* MARKING 14 YEARS OF ORGANIZING
AGAINST WAR & OCCUPATION *
AN EVENING DEDICATED TO THE OF
PEOPLE OF YEMEN

SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 18
MONTHLY RALLY &
PETITIONING
2PM - VANCOUVER
ART GALLERY
(HOWE & ROBSON,
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WWW.MAWOVANCOUVER.ORG

OUR HERITAGE



Alexandra Kollontai

1872-1952

**Excerpt: “Marriage and the Problem
of the Family” section from The
Social Basis of the Woman Question –
published in 1909**

Let us turn our attention to another aspect of the woman question, the question of the family. The importance that the solution of this urgent and complex question has for the genuine emancipation of women is well known. The struggle for political rights, for the right to receive doctorates and other academic degrees, and for equal pay for equal work, is not the full sum of the fight for equality. To become really free woman has to throw off the heavy chains of the current forms of the family, which are outmoded and oppressive. For women, the solution of the family question is no less important than the achievement of political equality and economic independence.

In the family of today, the structure of which is confirmed by custom and law, woman is oppressed not only as a person but as a wife and mother, in most of the countries of the civilised world the civil code places women in a greater or lesser dependence on her husband, and awards the husband not, only the right to dispose of her property but also the right of moral and physical dominance over her.

PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU: No Easy Way to Take Away our Rights! Bill C-51 and Bill C-59 Will Be Defeated!

By Max Tennant

During the month of October, the Working Group to Repeal Bill C-51 has been continuing its campaign to demand Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, "Repeal Bill C-51 and Scrap Bill C-59!"

Over two and half years the Working Group has organized 139 weekly actions, both pickets at busy transit hubs and banner drops over high-traffic routes. This month saw successful pickets at Gilmore and Langara -49th Stations, which engaged with both students and workers from Burnaby and Vancouver.

As the winter months approach and the sun

sets sooner, the Working Group had its last banner drop for the season in South Burnaby, which received hundreds of honks.

Our team also managed to have passersby ask questions, take leaflets and sign the petition. The concern about Bill C-51 and Bill C-59 is growing. There has never been such strong support from cars and passersby for our opposition to these undemocratic measures.

Despite attempts by the Liberal government to neutralize opposition to the original law by introducing a supposedly more balanced Bill C-59, here in the Lower Mainland the Working Group will continue to defend our basic human rights by organizing weekly actions until Bill C-51 is repealed and Bill C-59 is scraped as well.

continued from page 12

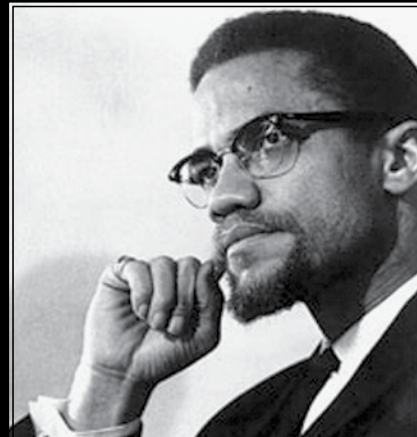
work towards ending the US blockade of Cuba which drew lots of applause from the audience. Deb talked about her experience in Cuba meeting the Lesbian activist group Las Isabella's in Santiago in 2012 and discussing with the group leader, also a nurse like Deb, on health issues faced by the queer community in Cuba and the US. She spoke about her favorable impression of how Cuba is unique compared to other countries in their willingness to listen to the people, admit and learn from their mistakes and facilitate community debates and discussions on the human rights of LGBT Cubans in all urban, rural and remote corners of the country in order to change minds. Moon then ended the talk with a passionate discussion regarding the work she has lead on the Cuba and US Lesbian and Allies Project under the umbrella of the US Women in Cuba Collaboration. The 3 of us answered a few thoughtful questions from the audience and then had to cut it short because the conference was running way behind schedule. What an honor it was to be able to participate and present at this

wonderful conference. Viva Cuba!

Also present at the conference to remind us of the indigenous peoples of the land in Vancouver with prayer, song and some history of local tribes, and current social issues was Eagle Eyes, Hereditary Chief and Indigenous elder of Sechelt tribe and Chief Bob Chamberlin, VP Union of BC Indian Chiefs. At the official closing of the 7th Che Guevara conference, Kelly White, Coast Salish elder, teacher, broadcaster and longtime activist led everyone in a beautiful Salish traditional ceremonial way of governance. Kelly started by saying "we honor the special ones who the spirits brought here to share their crucial message."

She invited our special guests from Cuba onto the stage draping them with amazing colorful blankets of protection of mind, body and soul, the healing, the umbilical cord of revolution. She went on to explain the history of the 4 directions in transformation and life in building revolution. "It is a time for us to listen", she exclaimed. Kelly ended the closing ceremony with a dance called, "Evolution of the revolution in stepping forward".

"By Any Means Necessary..."



MALCOLM X SPEAKS

Excerpt from Malcolm X speech at Harvard Law School December 16, 1964

I say in conclusion that the Negro problem has ceased to be a Negro problem. It has ceased to be an American problem and has now become a world problem, a problem for all humanity. Negroes waste their time confining their struggle to civil rights: In that context the problem remains only within the jurisdiction of the United States. No allies can help Negroes without violating United States protocol.

But today the black man in America has seen his mistake and is correcting it by lifting his struggle from the level of civil rights to the level of human rights. No longer does the United States government sit in an ivory tower where it can point at South Africa, point at the Portuguese, British, French, and other European colonial powers. No longer can the United States hold twenty million black people in second-class citizenship and think that the world will keep a silent mouth. No matter what the independent African states are doing in the United Nations, it is only a flicker, a glimpse, a ripple of what this country is in for in the future, unless a halt is brought to the illegal injustices which our people continue to suffer every day.

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Vancouver, Montreal, Ottawa and Kiev - Cuba Supporters on the Streets to Demand: Lift the Blockade on Cuba

By Janine Solanki

The US blockade on Cuba is usually discussed in terms of its impact on Cuba. However, the recent devastating hurricanes to hit the Caribbean and US Gulf Coast have shown that the US blockade is a policy which has negative effects for the US too – particularly at the expense of poor and working people in the US and Puerto Rico. Although both Cuba and Puerto Rico took direct hits from Hurricane Maria and Irma and sustained massive damages, the preparation and recovery responses were very different. In Cuba many steps were taken to protect lives and infrastructure including evacuations of people and pets, and reconstruction efforts were immediate and well organized. In contrast, Puerto Rico under U.S. occupation is still struggling to get electricity restored, which has become its own scandal, and to provide medical attention to those who need it and to reconstruct homes and infrastructure.

Despite Cuba being in the middle of their own hurricane recovery, they have offered at least 39 doctors to assist in Puerto Rico. However, since Puerto Rico is (unjustly and illegally) under US rule, this offer has not been accepted. Cuba has shown itself to be a model for hurricane preparation and recovery, and for their

international solidarity particularly with sending doctors to disaster zones. Imagine how much better off the people of Puerto Rico could be, and how much more international solidarity Cuba would be capable of, if the blockade was lifted!

For over two years, Friends of Cuba Against the US Blockade – Vancouver (FCAB-Van) has been organizing monthly picket actions in front of the



US Consulate in Vancouver, demanding an end to the US blockade on Cuba and for the return of US-occupied Guantanamo to Cuba. FCAB-Van started these protests after former US President Obama made the historic announcement on December 17, 2014, that the US would begin normalizing relations with Cuba. This opened a unique opportunity for the lifting of the blockade

that made public protest in against the blockade even more important. Now with US President Trump trying to roll back the few progresses made under Obama, the call to end the blockade and return Guantanamo must be even louder and stronger!

On October 17, 2017 FCAB-Van was out in full force in front of the US Consulate in Vancouver.

This monthly action has been taken on in other cities by Cuba solidarity activists and groups, and coordinated actions were held in Ottawa, Montreal and even Kiev, Ukraine! Supporters held up signs and marched in a picket line chanting energetically, "Lift the blockade on Cuba now!" and "Return Guantanamo to Cuba now!" The program of speakers included local activists, as well as a greeting of solidarity via phone message from Ottawa Cuba Connections and their picket in front of the US embassy.

Join FCAB-Van at the next picket on Friday November 17th at the US Consulate (1075 W. Pender St, Vancouver) at 4pm to stand up against the criminal US policies towards Cuba. For more information about actions against the blockade on Cuba visit www.vancubavsblockade.org, follow FCAB-Van on Facebook or on Twitter @NoBloqueoVan



By Janine Solanki

On September 22, 2017 the government of Canada announced that it was imposing new sanctions against Venezuela. This latest illegal escalation is part of the U.S.-led attacks against Venezuela which are attempting to overthrow the democratically elected government of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro. Both the US and Canada have also refused to recognize Venezuela's democratically elected National Constituent Assembly, in an attempt to undermine the Bolivarian revolutionary process.

Vancouver Activists Demand: US/Canada Hands Off Venezuela!

Since the election of former Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez in 1998, the Bolivarian Revolution has made huge gains to improve housing, healthcare, education and literacy in Venezuela. Venezuela was taken from the hands of the wealthy elite (who still today are violently trying to take back power), and Venezuela became a country where poor and working people are the motor force for advancing the Bolivarian Revolution, and benefiting from it. Even Venezuela's constitution was rewritten to enshrine in law important advances such as the rights of women, Indigenous people and the environment.

In Vancouver, the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice Venezuela Solidarity Campaign has taken up organizing monthly picket actions, in support of Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution and defending Venezuela's right to self-determination which is being threatened by the governments of the US and Canada. The action started out on October 6th in front of the US Consulate in Downtown Vancouver, where

supporters of Venezuela held picket signs and chanted, "No to Sanctions on Venezuela!" and "US Hands Off Venezuela!"

The protest then continued in the busy downtown Vancouver center in front of the Vancouver Art Gallery, where activists setup an information table. Passers-by stopped to find out more about what is really happening in Venezuela, beyond the Western media manipulations. A new petition demanding that Canada end its sanctions and threats against Venezuela was on clipboards with activists approaching people walking by to gather signatures and to discuss the latest developments in Canada's actions against Venezuela. Now more than ever, Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution needs the solidarity of peace and justice loving people around the world. The Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign will be out on the streets every month in defense of Venezuela. To join in or find out more, check out www.firethistime.net or follow on Twitter @FTT_np

acciones hipócritas ya que con las mismas se busca profundizar la crisis económica para convertirla en una crisis humanitaria y afectar a los sectores populares, que son la mayoría en Venezuela y principal soporte de la Revolución Bolivariana.

Afortunadamente, además del rechazo categórico a todas estas acciones, nuestro gobierno ha visto estos ataques imperiales como una oportunidad para liberarnos de la dominación del dólar, y el presidente Maduro adoptó una serie de medidas para contrarrestar los efectos perniciosos en nuestra economía, siendo la más emblemática la implementación de una cesta monetaria para el uso de varias divisas de países emergentes en nuestro relacionamiento financiero externo. La exitosa gira realizada recientemente por el presidente de Nicolás Maduro confirmó que Venezuela no está sola y cuenta con el respaldo de varios Estados con los que mantenemos una asociación estratégica o un marco de cooperación bilateral en progreso.

Sabemos que Estados Unidos no está solo en sus pretensiones injerencistas y de pretendido tutelaje sobre Venezuela. Washington ha llamado a todos sus aliados a seguir el camino con sanciones similares, y lamentablemente, entre ellos, se encuentran muchos países de América Latina sobre los que Estados Unidos, prácticamente, dan instrucciones. Desafortunadamente, Canadá ha imitado este comportamiento violatorio del Derecho Internacional y, el 22 de septiembre de 2017, adoptó medidas análogas que perturban los lazos de amistad, dicen que, para ayudar al pueblo venezolano, pero es ese mismo pueblo que al final sale más perjudicado. Con su decisión, Canadá no valoró el marco de respeto que hemos mantenido durante casi 70 años de relaciones ininterrumpidas. Con sus acciones, Canadá tampoco dio muestras de su independencia del tutelaje estadounidense, como lo pregonaba, y con esto sigue sin mostrar un auténtico y verdadero liderazgo propio en Latinoamérica, y con este tipo de posturas jamás lo va a conseguir.

Evidentemente que las grandes corporaciones mediáticas han dado otro matiz a estas acciones ilegales y mantienen su campaña mediática de distorsión de la realidad y de desprestigio internacional contra Venezuela, como parte de su contribución sistémica para proteger los intereses del poder hegemónico mundial para garantizar la permanencia de su pretendida dominación global.

En su estrategia, estas corporaciones comunicacionales transnacionales también han difundido en todo el mundo una imagen de Venezuela como un país en bancarota y con una crisis económica insuperable. Con la imposición de sanciones unilaterales e ilegales se ha profundizado la guerra financiera internacional, acciones que junto al quiebre del modelo rentista petrolero y la guerra económica interna, han desestabilizado a la

economía venezolana, agudizando la escasez de productos básicos y golpeando a los sectores más vulnerables de la población. Entre otras medidas, el Gobierno Bolivariano ha impulsado un plan de diversificación de la economía cuyos efectos serán vistos a mediano y largo plazo; pero para atender las necesidades inmediatas del pueblo se crearon los Comités Locales de Abastecimiento y Producción (CLAP), una nueva forma de organización popular que



El presidente Maduro anuncia las elecciones de la Asamblea Nacional Consistente (arriba), Los organizadores de CLAP entregan alimentos y productos básicos (abajo)

beneficia, de manera directa, a 6 millones de familias, con la distribución, casa por casa, de más de 60.000 toneladas de alimentos cada semana, y este alcance sigue creciendo.

También se nos ha querido imponer la matriz de que somos un gobierno dictatorial e irrespetuoso de los derechos humanos, y Venezuela está trabajando en esta materia y sus esfuerzos han sido reconocidos en diversos foros internacionales. Por ejemplo, en el último Examen Periódico Universal del Consejo de los Derechos Humanos de las Naciones Unidas, Venezuela fue mejor evaluado que Estados Unidos. En Venezuela hay libertad de expresión plena, la gente puede decir lo que quiera, y en el caso de los señalamientos de la existencia de supuestos presos políticos, los ciudadanos o dirigentes detenidos y aun privados de libertad, han sido responsables de violar el ordenamiento jurídico interno por las instancias judiciales competentes.

Nuestro gobierno está trabajando con ahínco para resolver un problema histórico, producto de la renta petrolera, como lo es la corrupción, y hoy en día se ha hecho más visible, pues durante los 40 años de democracia representativa la ocultaban para beneficio de una elite excluyente y clasista.

FTT: También quisiera preguntarle acerca de la Asamblea Nacional Consistente, ¿cuál es su evaluación del proceso hasta ahora?

Sr. Barrientos: La Asamblea Nacional Constituyente ya es un hecho político-jurídico y es un fiel reflejo de la voluntad soberana, de la firme dignidad de un pueblo con una clara conciencia política, un bastión de la resistencia latinoamericana.

Desde su elección, el pasado 30 de julio de 2017, y de la instalación de este poder originario, el pasado 04 de agosto de 2017, Venezuela ha vuelto a la normalidad poniendo fin a las manifestaciones violentas y vive en un clima de paz y de tranquilidad ciudadana. La Asamblea Nacional Constituyente es un instrumento de paz y diálogo, y su convocatoria por parte del Presidente Nicolás Maduro estuvo siempre apegada a la Constitución, a nuestro marco jurídico, y quien conoce nuestro texto constitucional sabe que es un elemento apegado a esta. Su llamado estuvo dirigido a restaurar la paz nacional, privilegiando el respeto y la tolerancia política, frente a la violencia generalizada que pretendieron imponer los factores de la oposición venezolana y la injerencia imperial creciente encabezada por Estados Unidos, y secundada por Canadá.

La elección de la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente fue un proceso exitoso para toda la sociedad venezolana, y respaldado con la participación de más de 8 millones de venezolanos, cuyo único deseo es vivir en paz y que sea el propio pueblo venezolano que determine el destino del país rechazando cualquier injerencia externa y, de este modo, mantener, y profundizar, las conquistas sociales alcanzadas desde la llegada de la Revolución Bolivariana bajo el liderazgo del Comandante Hugo Chávez.

Desde que se instaló este poder, observamos que como respuestas los poderes imperialistas han arreciado el asedio contra Venezuela incrementado sus ataques, sus amenazas y su injerencia abyecta.

FTT: ¿Qué crees que debemos hacer para construir un movimiento de solidaridad más fuerte con Venezuela y el proceso revolucionario bolivariano aquí en Canadá?

Sr. Barrientos: Es fundamental que los pueblos que tienen clara conciencia de que en Venezuela no hay una dictadura, que no se está deteriorando la democracia, sino que se quiere profundizar una verdadera democracia. digan la verdad y contrarresten las mentiras virtuales creadas contra Venezuela en su pretensión por apoderarse de las inmensas riquezas del país.

Hoy más que nunca debemos crear una gran red de solidaridad para estar interconectados y denunciar la arremetida de los poderes imperiales contra la soberanía venezolana. Venezuela es el punto central de los ataques de los centros hegemónicos contra los países progresistas y, de caer Venezuela, sería un duro golpe para todos los pueblos libres del mundo. No permitamos que este supuesto negado se haga realidad.

FTT: Gracias por esta entrevista.

organizaciones internacionales y regionales que han contribuido con su voz y su voto, año tras año, a fundamentar la justeza y la urgencia de la abolición del bloqueo.

Extendemos también nuestra gratitud a la amplia mayoría del pueblo estadounidense por su apoyo a este loable propósito. [...]

Señor Presidente:

Encomiamos muy especialmente a todos los que han expresado preocupación y rechazo por las medidas coercitivas anunciadas por el actual gobierno estadounidense.

El pueblo cubano no renunciará jamás a construir una Nación soberana, independiente, socialista, democrática, próspera y sostenible (Aplausos).

Persistiremos, con el consenso de nuestro pueblo y especialmente el compromiso patriótico de los cubanos más jóvenes, en la lucha antimperialista y en defensa de nuestra independencia, por la que ya han caído decenas de miles de cubanos y hemos corrido los mayores riesgos, como demostramos en Playa Girón y frente a todas las amenazas.

Guardaremos eterna lealtad al legado de José Martí y de Fidel Castro Ruz (Aplausos).

Señor Presidente;

Distinguidos representantes permanentes;

Estimadas delegadas y delegados:

Nuestro pueblo sigue con esperanza este debate. En su nombre, les solicito votar a favor del proyecto de resolución A/72/L.30, «Necesidad de poner fin al bloqueo económico, comercial y financiero impuesto por los Estados Unidos de América contra Cuba».

Muchas gracias (Aplausos prolongados)

Exclamaciones de: «Viva Cuba!» «Cuba sí, bloqueo no!»

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We are deeply grateful to all the governments and peoples, parliaments, political forces and social movements, civil society representatives, international and regional organizations that have contributed with their voice and their vote, year after year, to support the justice and urgency of the abolition of the blockade.

We also extend our gratitude to the vast majority of the American people for their support of this commendable goal. [...]

Mr. President:

We especially commend all those who have expressed concern and their rejection of the coercive measures announced by the current U.S. government.

The Cuban people will never give up building a sovereign, independent, socialist, democratic, prosperous and sustainable nation. (Applause).

We will persevere, with the consensus of our people and especially the patriotic commitment of the youngest Cubans, in the anti-imperialist struggle and in defense of our independence, for which tens of thousands of Cubans have already fallen and we have run the greatest risks, as we demonstrated in Playa Girón and in the face of all threats.

We will maintain eternal loyalty to the legacy of José Martí and Fidel Castro Ruz. (Applause).

Mr. President:

Distinguished permanent representatives; Esteemed delegates:

Our people are following this debate with hope. On their behalf, I request that you vote in favor of draft resolution A/72/L.30, "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States of America against Cuba."

Many thanks. (Prolonged applause).

Exclamations of: "Viva Cuba!" "Cuba sí, bloqueo no!"

Full speech available on: www.granma.cu

The Newspaper Of
FIRE THIS TIME
MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE
www.firethistime.net
Volume 11 Issue 11
November 2017
Published Monthly

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For a one year subscription outside the lower mainland, make cheques payable to "Nita Palmer" (Canada \$15, USA \$20, International \$30) Send to: PO Box 21607 Vancouver BC, V5L 5G3

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For Fire This Time in your area across BC, Canada, and Internationally contact Publicity and Distribution Coordinator *Thomas Davies*
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-ISSN-1712-1817-



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